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THE
C H E R W E L L W A T E R - L I L Y,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

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THE
CHERWELL WATER-LILY,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY THE REV.

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER, M.A.
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the
beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.—JOB v. 23.

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TO

HENRY FABER, ESQ.

AND

THE REV. FRANCIS FABER, B.D.

MY BROTHERS AND SECOND FATHERS,

This Volume

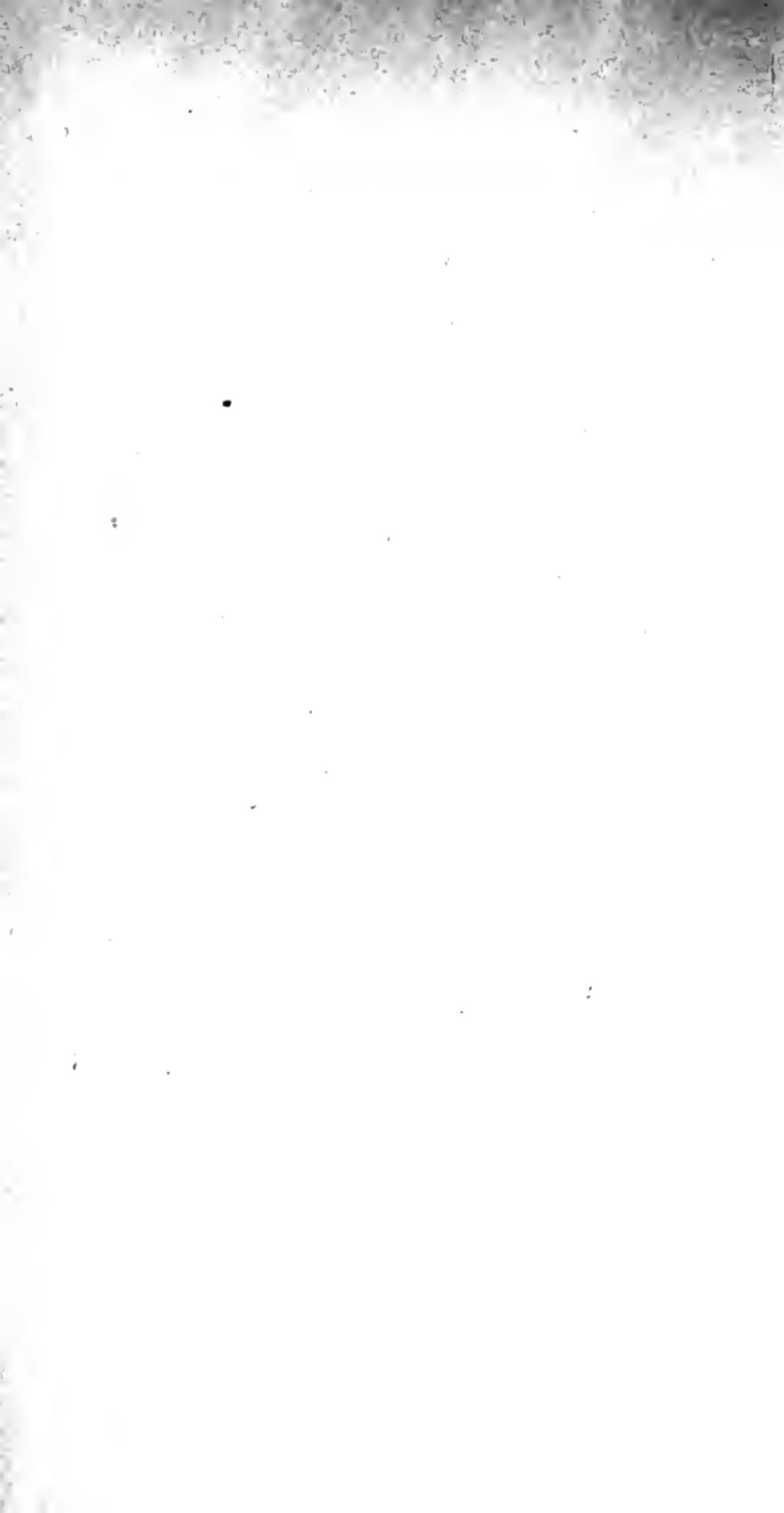
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AMBLESIDE,

THE FEAST OF ST. JAMES,

MDCCCXL.



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“ Nous touchons à la plus grande des époques religieuses, où tout homme est tenu d'apporter, s'il en a la force, une pierre pour l'édifice auguste dont les plans sont visiblement arrêtés. La médiocrité des talents ne doit effrayer personne.”

DE MAISTRE.



Preface.

BLAME not my verse if echos of church bells
 With every change of thought or dream are
 twining,

Fetching a murmuring sameness from the
 fells

And lakes and rivers with their inland shining.
 And marvel not in these loose drifting times
 If anchored spirits in their blythest motion
 Dip to their anchors veiled within the ocean,
 Catching too staid a measure for their rhymes.
 An Age comes on, which came three times
 of old¹,

When the enfeebled nations shall stand still
 To be by Christian science shaped at will;
 And Taste and Art, rejecting heathen mould,
 Shall draw their types from Europe's middle
 night,

Well-pleased if such good darkness be their
 light.

F. W. F.

¹ The end of the fourth, the beginning of the thirteenth,
 and the end of the sixteenth Centuries.



The Cherwell Water-Lily.

I.

The Cherwell Water-Lily.

I.

BRIGHT came the last departing gleam
To lonely Cherwell's silent stream,
And for a moment seemed to smile
On tall St. Mary's graceful pile.
But brighter still the glory stood
On Marston's wild sequestered wood.
The lights, that through the leaves were sent,
Of gold and green were richly blent;
Oh ! beautiful they were to see,
Gilding the trunk of many a tree,
Just as the colours died away
In evening's meditative gray.

Sweet meadow-flowers were round me spread,

And many a budding birch-tree shed

Its woodland perfume there;

And from its pinkly-clustering boughs,

A fragrance mild the hawthorn throws

Upon the tranquil air.

Deep rung St. Mary's stately chime

The holy hour of vesper time,

And, as the solemn sounds I caught

Over the distant meadows brought,

I heard the raptured nightingale

Tell, from yon elmy grove, his tale

Of jealousy and love,

In thronging notes that seemed to fall

As faultless and as musical

As angel strains above:—

So sweet, they cast on all things round

A spell of melody profound.

They charmed the river in his flowing,

They stayed the night-wind in its blowing,

They lulled the lily to her rest,

Upon the Cherwell's heaving breast.

2.

How often doth a wildflower bring
Fancies and thoughts that seemed to spring
From inmost depths of feeling !

Nay, often they have power to bless
With their uncultured loveliness,
And far into the aching breast
There goes a heavenly thought of rest
With their soft influence stealing.

How often, too, can ye unlock,
Dear Wildings ! with a gentle shock,
The fountains of the heart,
And bid Religion sweetly rise,
Before the mourner's troubled eyes,
To do her holy part !

Ah ! surely such strange power is given
To lowly flowers, like dew, from heaven ;
For lessons oft by them are brought
Deeper than mortal sage hath taught,
Lessons of wisdom pure, that rise
From some clear fountains in the skies !

3.

Fairest of Flora's lovely daughters
That bloom by stilly-running waters,
Fair Lily ! thou a type must be
Of virgin love and purity !
Fragrant thou art as any flower
That decks a lady's garden-bower.
But he who would thy sweetness know,
Must stoop and bend his loving brow
To catch thy scent, so faint and rare,
Scarce breathed upon the summer air.
And all thy motions, too, how free,
And yet how fraught with sympathy !—
So pale thy tint, so meek thy gleam
Shed on thy kindly father-stream !
Still, as he swayeth to and fro,
 How true in all thy goings,
As if thy very soul did know
 The secret of his flowings.
And then that heart of living gold,
Which thou dost modestly infold

And screen from man's too searching view
Within thy robe of snowy hue.
To careless men thou seem'st to roam
 Abroad upon the river,
In all thy movements chained to home,
 Fast-rooted there for ever :
Linked by a holy, hidden tie,
Too subtle for a mortal eye,
Nor riveted by mortal art,
Deep down within thy father's heart.
Emblem in truth thou art to me
Of all a woman ought to be !
How shall I liken thee, sweet flower !
That other men may feel thy power,
May seek thee on some lovely night,
And say how strong, how chaste the might,
 The tie of filial duty,
How graceful too, and angel-bright,
 The pride of lowly beauty !
Thou sittest on the varying tide
As if thy spirit did preside

With a becoming, queenly grace,
As mistress of this lonely place ;
A quiet magic hast thou now
To smooth the river's ruffled brow,
And still his rippling water :
And yet so delicate and airy,
Thou art to him a very fairy,
A widowed father's only daughter.

II.

On Revisiting the River Eden,
IN WESTMORELAND, 1836.

At night I heard the river's quiet sound
Still flowing on o'er that enchanted ground
As years ago it flowed : the autumn breeze
Lay hushed within the dark-leaved alder-trees,
And from unclouded skies the moon's cold beam
Fell in a silver shower upon the stream ;
And oh ! how fair, how heavenly fair the scene
Caught through the leafy aisles and arches green,
Where light and shade, most marvellously thrown,
Rest on each giant tree and mossy stone !
Soft—as the light that Faith doth shed around
Whene'er her pathway lies through holy ground ;

Dim—as the mist through which she loves to see
But half-unveiled the lines of mystery ;
Glorious beyond expression—as the thought,
The hour of death to saintly men hath brought !

Wake, Memory, wake, and feel at this lone hour
Thine own dear Eden's meekest, holiest power ;
How many a tale of other times she brings
With her eternal, harp-like murmurings !
How sad the thought, that weary years are gone
And the steep heights of virtue not yet won ;
Alas ! how sharp the pang, how keen the sense
Of vows forgotten, slighted penitence ;
And yet how cheering too the hope from heaven
Of mercy there, and sin that is forgiven.

Dear Eden ! the retreats of this green wood
Have heard the roar of many a winter flood
Since last I wandered here to while away
The golden hours of schoolboy holiday :
Thoughtful even then because of the excess
Of boyhood's rich abounding happiness ;
And sad whene'er St. Stephen's curfew-bell
Warned me to leave the spots I loved so well.

Each hazel-copse, each greenly-tangled bower
Is sacred to some well-remembered hour ;
Some quiet hour when Nature did her part,
And worked her spell upon my childish heart.
Ah ! little deemed I then that thou couldst wind
Thyself with such strange power into my mind.
Thou art not changed since then !—the air,
The trees, the fields, all are, as then they were,
Happy and beautiful, like fairy-land,
Fresh born beneath the wild enchanter's wand.

But hark ! down Kirby vale the curfew knell—
Then fare thee well, dear Eden, fare thee well !
And may thine image, wildly-dashing river,
Abide with me an household thing for ever.

III.

The Knights of St. John.

“ The Knight’s bones are dust,
And his good sword rust,
His soul is with the Saints, I trust.”

THE KNIGHT’S TOMB.

OH, Memory!—as boyhood’s years roll by,
How many a vision fades from Fancy’s eye,
How many a golden dream of days long past,
And airy hopes, too fair, too bright to last!
All, all are gone. The wild Arabian tale,
Aladdin’s lamp, and Sinbad’s magic sail,
These have no power to chain the listening ear,
Or hush the soul in ecstasy of fear:
Untenanted, unhaunted now, the hill,
The lonely heath, the waving woods, are still;
Fairies no more beneath the moon’s pale light
Reveal their mystic dance to mortal sight;

Each shadowy form grows dim ; and we deplore
A splendour that is seen on earth no more.

Yes—it is Manhood's haughty right to quell
Young Fancy's fire, and break the darling spell ;
To strip the mind of all she valued most,
And grant her no return for what she lost.

Land of Romance, Farewell ! Yet though we part
With these fond superstitions of the heart,
Oh let us not in scornful wisdom deem
These old memorials but a baseless dream,
Mere phantoms idly raised to while away
The lingering hours of some long summer's day.
Far otherwise they think, who best may scan
The powers at work within the heart of man.
They know how heavenly pure the soul should be
Which Fancy's gentle thraldom hath made free,
They know how pensive thoughts may best arise
To kindle Nature's holiest sympathies,
The deep affections of the breast to move,
And call to life the strong, meek power of love.
Visions like these float swiftly through the mind,
Like the soft flowings of the voiceless wind.

—Have ye not seen the shadow-stains that glide
On gleamy days along the mountain side,
How they unveil in every green recess
Strange, mingling scenes of power and loveliness,
And then in stately pomp ride on? So too
Imagination's gay, though transient, hue
Discloses to the Reason's inward eyes
Somewhat of Nature's depths and mysteries.

And thus with you, fair forms of days gone by,
Glories of Song, high feats of chivalry!
Cold were the man whom tales of ladye-love
And knightly prowess had no spell to move.
Such were the strains that gushed like living fire
From the wild chords of Ariosto's lyre;
Or from that harp, alas! too soon unstrung,
That to the Tweed's wild dashings sweetly rung,
Whose mourning waves still softly bear along
The dying echoes of her poet's song.

Holiest of Knighthood's gallant sons were Ye,
A sainted band, the Knights of Charity!
'Twas not an earthly guerdon that could move
Your gentle Brotherhood to acts of love.

Fame's silver star, and Honour's dazzling meeds,
And Glory reaped in Battle's daring deeds,
These could not lure those hearts to mercy given,
Who, poor on earth, were rich in hopes of Heaven.
Yes ! it was well in those dark days of old
Europe should wonder as her Pilgrims told
How haughty warriors left the lordly hall
For the rude cells of that poor Hospital¹,
And bade Ambition's restless throbings cease
At the still watchword of the Prince of Peace.
How along Salem's streets, in sable vest,
The Silver Cross emblazoned on the breast,
The lowly Brothers moved with hurried tread
To tend the wayworn pilgrim's dying bed,
And give, for Christ's dear Name, to that dim hour
Religion's awful, consecrating power.

Peace to that ruined City ! peace to those
Whose sainted ashes in her vaults repose !
There, when the Arabian Prophet's countless throng
Rolled, like an Eastern locust-swarm, along,

¹ In the *Hospital*, the Knights wore a *black* vest, with a *white* Cross of eight points on the left breast. In the *Camp*, the *white* Cross on a *red* vest.—(Vide infra.)

And blight came down upon the nations, there
St. John's bright banner floated in the air,
Curling its glossy folds against the sky,
While clarions pealed, and pennons waved on high.
One speechless look, one silent prayer to Heaven,
And, hark! the Christian's battle-cry is given :
The dauntless knights thrust back the advancing
flood,
And Siloa's brook runs red with Moslem blood.
Alas, fair Salem ! Piety may weep
O'er the dark caverns where thy champions sleep.
There stern Disorder strews along the ground
Fragments of elder, holier days around,
And Ruin rears aloft her ghastly form,
Dim-shadowed in the blackness of the storm.
Nor feathery nopal-tree, nor spreading palm²
Shed o'er thy hills their wildly-graceful charm.
Few flowers are there, but round each falling tomb
In scattered tufts bright orange-lilies bloom,
Bursting from out their silvery, gauzelike sheath
To smile in beauty o'er the shrines of death,

² See Chateaubriand's minute description of the scenery near Jerusalem.—Travels, vol. i. chap. 2.

And cedars crown the hills, a silent band,
The only warders of thy wasted land ;
Thine only troubadour the Southern breeze
Singing his quiet song among those ancient trees.

Vainly for you, brave Knights, did Europe pour
Her ardent bands upon that sacred shore.

Vainly St. Louis' Oriflamme rode high
In gleamy splendour on the Eastern sky,
Far in the swarthy vales, where ancient Nile
Rolls his rich flood round many a lotus-isle.

Too fruitful harvest of the Paynim lance,
There lay thy chosen sons, unhappy France !

Vainly did Edward lead the bannered host
While England's war-cry ran along the coast ;
The Saracens rolled on, and thousands fell
Before the cohorts of the infidel,
And bright above the eddying tide of war
The conquering Crescent glittered from afar.

Yet still, where Carnage fiercest swept the field,
The Crimson Vest, like lightning, shone revealed ;
Still, still they come, the Warrior-Brothers come
Where on the ruined altars of their home
Are hung bright crowns of holiest Martyrdom !

That glory hath gone by ! On Judah's shore
 The Christian soldier plants the Cross no more ;
 And Acre's ramparts, wasted Ascalon,
 Mourn for the gallant Brothers of St. John.
 And sadly now, brave Knights, upon the seas
 Your fading banner droops, as though the breeze
 That wooed its silken folds to play, had come
 From the green hills that *were* that banner's home.
 There on his deck the silent Warrior stood
 Scanning with sternest gaze the heaving flood,
 As if to find in those dark depths below
 Some magic talisman to soothe his woe.
 He dared not eye the sunny land that lay
 In the blue distance many a mile away.

Well might that glory pass ! Her icy hand
 Had Superstition laid on that dear land.
 And was it strange that as the Pilgrim trod
 In pensive silence up the Mournful Road³,
 And marked with fond affection's eager eye
 Where the Redeemer was led forth to die—
 Oh ! was it strange in such an hour to feel
 A dim, a shadowy dread around him steal,

³ "La Via Dolorosa."

(Not the unholy, restless fear that springs
From out the bitterness of earthly things,)
A hallowed dread, that lulls the soul to rest,
And whispers peace and gladness to the breast,
Shedding around our path, where'er we move,
The deathless lustre of intensest love.
Nor doubt that true Devotion still might be
Bright through the mists of fond idolatry :
Go, seek some chancel when the moonbeams
 throw

Their cold, chaste radiance on the tombs below,
Where the young Novice her lone vigil keeps,
And o'er some sacred relic prays and weeps :
Go, mark her heaving breast, her streaming eyes
Upraised in speechless fervor to the skies,
And read that love, which words may not express,
In the pale depth of their blue silentness.

Far o'er the waves those gallant Warriors roam
To win in other climes another home.
Four years they fought, fair Rhodes, 'gainst
 leaguered powers,
To plant their banner on thine ancient towers :

They fought and conquered. On the Grecian seas
In fearless triumph ride their argosies,
Where erst the pirate-barques were wont to sweep
In haughty lordship o'er the Lycian deep.
No more the lone felucca seeks to glide
Round the tall headlands on the summer tide,
Or smoothly steals along from shore to shore,
Charming the ear of night with muffled oar.
But Moslem hatred sleeps not : that dark host,
Flung like a weary billow on a coast,
Gathers with angry sound. Ah ! who shall tell
What met thy gaze, thou lonely Sentinel,
When, standing watchful on St. Stephen's hill,
The City lay below thee, fair and still ?
In reddening streaks, that peaceful April morn⁴,
Across the sea the first faint light was borne.

⁴ “ In the end of *April* 1480, the grand armament entered the Lycian waters : and the Rhodian sentinel stationed on the summit of Mount St. Stephen, a hill two miles from the city, notified by signal that the Crescent was in sight.”—Sutherland’s Achievements of the Knights of St. John, vol. ii. p. 9.

The calm *Æ*gean spread her breast of blue
To skies of deeper yet, and lovelier hue,
To Grecian skies ! And there old Asia lay
Touched with the golden hand of early day ;
And wide beneath him stretched his native isle,
Bright with an Eastern spring-tide's magic smile.
Meadows of flowering myrrh perfume the breeze⁵
That freshens o'er the bosom of the seas :
And there yon forest's leafy depths entwine
Their budding foliage round the Parian shrine ;
And delicate wild-roses too have thrown
Their blushing chaplets round the chiselled stone
In natural gracefulness ; to morning's rays
The laurel-rose her gaudy gem displays,
Where the soft-rippling streamlet gently moves
Winding with quiet lapse among the groves.

⁵ “ Rhodes rises like a bouquet of verdure from the bosom of the sea. It still exhibits some splendid remains of its ancient fortifications, and the rich Asiatic vegetation which crowns and envelopes them imparts more grace and beauty than are to be seen at Malta.”—Lamartine’s Tour, vol. i. p. 147, 148.

Beautiful Island ! fair that morn wert thou ;
How passing fair in all thy ruin now !

Lo ! On the sea ten thousand Crescents gleam,
Glancing and flashing in the rising beam :
And thickly gathering sounds come sweeping by
Of joyaunce loud and maddening minstrelsy ;
And, wild and harsh, the cymbal-note is borne
On the deep stillness of the breaking morn.
Mohammed's galleys come ! The Sentinel
Rung from his lofty tower the larum bell,
And, as its toll in startling accents spoke
Of danger and of fear, the sleeping City woke !
Then came the battle's din : the cannon's roar
Was echoed back from Caramania's shore ;
And fearfully along that lovely sky
Glared the red tempest of artillery.
Dear was that triumph bought, Brave Chief, for
thou⁶,

When Death came down upon thy laurelled brow,

⁶ Peter d'Aubusson ; Thirty-eighth Grand-master ; called the Buckler of Christendom.

Didst in that hour with clear, prophetic eye,
The gathering storm of Eastern war descry :
And, Rhodes, thy matrons might have spared the
tear

They shed so wildly o'er the old man's bier.
They might have spared it for that bitter day
When through thy shattered streets they took
their way,

And He⁷, the generous Victor, wept to see
The high-souled chieftain's peerless dignity⁸,
Deeming a Christian had some magic power
To bear him up in sorrow's darkest hour.

—Where were *thy* tears, wide Europe, when the
blast

Of Paynim war o'er that fair island past ?
And where thy gratitude, when Ocean bore
That close-furled banner to the Latian shore ?
Was it for you it oft had waved on high
Decked in the crimson pride of victory ?

⁷ Solyman the Magnificent.

⁸ Villiers de l'Isle Adam ; Forty-second Grand-master.

Alas ! On far St. Elmo's castled steep
It hangs its sullen splendours o'er the deep ;
Far from *that* hill around whose craggy base⁹
A hundred villas shine with Eastern grace :
No terraced vines, no lilyed fields are here,
Laughing in rich luxuriance all the year :
No incense-breathing gardens freight the breeze
Making low music in the cypress trees :
Ah no ! the hot sirocco's withering breath
Flings o'er yon hills the arid hue of death,
And the fierce sun looks glaring from on high
As though a curse were in his broad, bright eye.

There, like an Eagle in her rocky bower,
The gallant Order braved the Moslem power ;
While Europe echoed with their martial fame,
And rung with La Valette's undying name.
Alas ! 'twas as a gleam of glory shed
From stormy skies upon the mountain's head.
That gleam is past : and England's pennon now
Floats gaily o'er St. Elmo's castled brow.

⁹ The St. Elmo at Malta was so called from a hill of the same name at Rhodes.

Beneath that guardian pennon undismayed
Wealth's busy votaries ply their peaceful trade ;
And, as Night's silent footfall steals along,
The Maltese boatman chants his even-song ;
And lowly Wisdom loves to render yet
The unavailing tribute of regret.

Farewell, then, gentle Warriors ! Once again
'Tis meet to raise the faintly-dying strain :
'Twas meet that when the pageantry of death
Hung round the hero's tomb the laurel-wreath,
'Twas meet his Minstrel-boy should linger near
To weep alone upon his Master's bier.
And often to the Warrior's silent cell
From a far land soft dreams shall come to dwell ;
While busy Fancy marks with curious eye
Tall helmet-plumes and bannered lines glance by,
Or feeds her meditative soul from springs
Of sunny thoughts and deep imaginings.
Oh ! still in Memory's clear, pathetic light
Shall live those dream-like forms for ever bright !
Oh ! while undying spirits still must crave
A better, nobler land beyond the grave,

In lowliness the feeling heart shall come
And watch by the Crusader's marble tomb,
Till the weird stillness of the cloistered air
Steal o'er the soul, and charm it into prayer,
And the strong-glancing, eagle eye of Faith
See far into the tranquil things of Death !

IV.

To an old Schoolfellow.

I.

THE sun looked down on fair Liege,
And it was market-day :
The bosom of the rushing Meuse
Was gleaming bright and gay.

II.

The peasant girls thronged in to church,
To pray as they went by :
Alas ! that such a sight should seem
So strange to an English eye.

III.

The notes of a familiar air
From off the bridge were borne ;
'Twas played by an Italian boy,
Who came from soft Leghorn.

IV.

Oh, Charles ! I started at the sound,—
For I learnt that tune from thee ;
And the thought of what thou wert, and art,
Was bitterness to me.

V.

How happily the days were spent,
And ever with each other,
When thou at school didst make of me
A sort of elder brother.

VI.

But thou hast wandered, Charles, since then,
And art a wanderer still,
Where pleasure never hath been found,—
And never, never will.

VII.

I've followed thee, with prayers and tears,
Through many a haunt of sin :
But all in vain ; thy truant soul
Those prayers could never win.

VIII.

Though of thy boyish feelings now
But few are left to thee,
Thy heart, thy fiery heart doth beat
As quick and fresh for me.

IX.

They tell me that I should not love
Where I can not esteem :
But do not fear them ; for to me
False wisdom doth it seem.

X.

Nay,—rather I should love thee more
The further thou dost rove ;
For what prayers are effectual,
If not the prayers of love ?

XI.

I did thee not the good I might
In schoolboy days of yore,
And much, I fear, of this thy guilt
Is lying at my door.

XII.

My sins rise up before me now ;
And sadly true it proves,
A loving heart too faithfully
Will copy those it loves.

XIII.

And thus it is that years of vice
Are gendered in an hour :
Oh, Christ !—our very souls are put
In one another's power !

—

V.

Heidelberg Castle.

OH ! if there be a spot upon the earth
Where Ruin hath more lightly laid her hand
Than elsewhere, surely it is this fair place !
Who ever saw Decay more beautiful
Than when she holds her silent court as now
Within the mouldering crypts of Heidelberg ?
Nay, one might think that Time himself were
awed
By such memorials of Man's pomp and power,
So that he walked with somewhat of a soft
And reverential step, as we should tread
Over the ashes of departed friends.
Spirit of Desolation ! Men may come
To do thee homage in thy lone retreats,

When broadleaved summer hangs about the walls
Her drapery of various green to hide
The unseemly scars of time, and from the towers
Gay flowering creepers fling their tendrils down
For the soft summer winds to wanton with,—
A banner bright as those that floated there
Upon some pageant day in olden time.

Yes, doubtless this would be a lovely place
At such a season,—when the tufted pinks
And scented wallflowers cling to every stone,
And when the little mountain-paths appear
Winding through vineyards, rich with purple
grapes.

Yet is it not the season when the power
Of Desolation is most deeply felt.

No ; Winter hath a beauty of its own,
And more in harmony with spots like these.

The Summer loves not silence : her great charm
Is in the concourse of a thousand sounds :—
The birds, the winds, the very Earth herself
Breathing with life at every bursting pore,
And that low ringing melody that comes

I know not whence or how, except it be
From things inanimate ;—so different
From Winter's tranquil and unbroken hush,
When frosts have locked the trickling wellsprings
 up

In the earth's caverns, and the winds are furled
Within the bosom of the brooding storm.

There is a deep embrasure in the hall
Wherein I sat, so buried and absorbed
In thought, I almost seemed to have become
Part of the spirit of that lonely place.
It passed upon me, like a dreamy spell,
And viewless as the air that clothes the earth.

About the Castle stood the shaggy hills,
Hung round with dark and uncouth legends,—such
As feed great minds, and are themselves the mind
Of a great nation ; and amongst the woods
Young boys and little maidens went about
Stripping the glossy ivy from the trees
To hang as Christmas garlands round their doors.
Far off a group of charcoal-burners stood,
And from their fire the constant smoke went up

In curls of faintest blue,—how silently !
And ever and anon the chattering jay
With his rude note awoke the slumbering woods,
Displacing the sweet stillness that was there.
But then the silence came again, and grew
Far more intense—with now and then a pause,—
When an old fount, that fell with splashing sound
On the green stones below the Castle wall,
Smote on my ear ; a sound most desolate,
And dreary as a tune that comes to mind
In some lone bower where those we've loved and
lost

Were wont to be, and now can be no more !

All these things came upon me with a shock,
Unsettling many most familiar thoughts
And feelings that were household in my heart.
I was as one who dimly felt his way
Among great truths and perilous mysteries,
To whom the knowledge of deep things did seem
About to be revealed,—the mighty powers
With which the air is all impregnated,
And the great earth, and the far rolling sea,

And the unquiet intellect of man ;
That something which is like the lightning fire
That leaps and lives within the thundercloud,
And is its fiery soul, and drives it on
In fierce career against the wind ! Then came
That desperate, sickening pang of impotence,
Which cannot grasp the truth that it doth touch,
As if that touch had paralyzed its hand.
But quick a sense of exultation rose,
And an ethereal buoyancy that bore
Me up upon the wings of power. I saw
The mighty truth that I would fain possess
Fixed in a region above all things else,
And in that region did I seem to walk.
Oh ! it was like a distant city seen
All lying in a bath of beauteous light
Within the heart of a rich golden haze,
Cheating the evening traveller's anxious eye
Of many a mile of weary distance—when
The sun goes down, and all is gloom again.
It struck the hour of noon : the quiet sound
Came muffled through the fleecy folds of mist

That thickly hung upon the town below.
So faint was it and soft—yet so distinct—
It seemed the spirit of a sound, escaped
From some more gross and heavy atmosphere.

VI.

The Isis.

I.

EARLY one twilight morn I sought
A favourite woodland shade,
A place where out of idleness
Some profit might be made.

I.

The voices of the little birds
Were musical and loud,
Buried among the twinkling leaves,
A merry, merry crowd.

III.

But, when the gallant sun rode up
Into his own broad sky,
The very wood itself did seem
Alive with melody.

IV.

And there the golden city lay
Safe in her leafy nest,
And softly on her clustering towers
The blush of dawn did rest.

V.

Onward for many and many a mile,
Through fields that lay below,
Old Isis, with his glassy stream,
Came pleasantly and slow.

VI.

The spring with blossoms rich and fair
Had fringed the river's edge,—
Pale Mayflowers, and wild hyacinths,
And spears of tall green sedge.

VII.

The ripple on the flowery marge
A pleasant sound did yield,
And pleasant was the wind that waved
The long grass in the field.

VIII.

And there is something in a stream
That fascinates the eye,
A charm in that eternal flow
That ever glideth by.

IX.

For still by riversides the hours
Will often lapse away,
Till evening almost seems to steal
A march upon the day.

X.

So should it be with Man's career :
Each hour a duty find,
And not a stone be there to check
The current of the mind.

XI.

The path of duty, like the stream,
Hath flowers that round it bloom,
The thicker and the lovelier
The nearer to the tomb.

XII.

And, ah ! the best and purest life
Is that which passes slow,
And yet withal so evenly
We do not feel it go.

VII.

Hope.

I.

How much they wrong thee, gentle Hope! who say
That thou art light of heart, and bright of eye!
Ah! no; thou wert not hope, if thou wert gay:
She hath no part with idle gaiety!

II.

The gay think only of the passing hour,
And the light mirth the flying moments yield;
But thou dost come when days of darkness lower,
And with the future do the present gild.

III.

Yes; thou, sweet Power! art Grief's twin-sister,
given
To walk with her the weary world around,
Scattering, like dew, the fragrant balm of heaven,
Where she hath left her freshly bleeding wound.

IV.

Oh ! often have I pictured thee in dreams,
For thou wert always very dear to me ;
And never was I sad but sunny gleams
Have visited my drooping heart from thee.

V.

Yet words can scarce pourtray thy lovely face,
As it hath shone on me at dead of night,
Wreathed with a smile of calm and serious grace,
Chaste as the moon's, as pensive, and as bright..

VI.

When pity for the grief we would beguile,
And the glad thought that we can render aid,
Strive in the heart, and blend into a smile,
Oh ! then that smile is thine, thou highborn maid !

VII.

And on thy brow there sits eternally
A look of deep, yet somewhat anxious bliss,
With a wild light that nestles in thine eye,
As though its home were not a world like this.

VIII.

Ash-Wednesday.

“ And beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.”
ST. MATT. xiv. 30.

I.

LORD ! I am thine, thy little child ;
Though fiercely still within, and wild
 The fires of youth do burn ;
Oh be not angry if I weep,
And dread these stormy waters deep,—
 Master ! to Thee I turn.

II.

And, if in zeal and forward haste,
All rashly from the ship I past,
 And tempted danger here,
Too great for one so weak as me,—
Yet, Lord, it was to come to Thee,
 Oh let me find Thee near !

III.

Now in these days of dimness holy
And spirit-searching melancholy,
Strengthen my drooping heart :
And let me stop each wayward sense
In pure and secret abstinence,
And from the world depart.

IV.

The Church, my Mother, calls me on
To follow Jesus, all alone,
Across the desert lea ;
And wrestle with the Tempter there
In vigils of incessant prayer,
And with wild beasts to be.

V.

And well I know, when weak and faint
With weary days in fasting spent,
I must lose sight of Him :
And thoughts impure and tempers ill
The ardour of my breast will chill,
And make my lamp burn dim.

VI.

Then by the hour that saw me rest
On Thine anointed Levite's breast
 Within his white robe's fold,
And by the Cross that on my brow
He signed,—the seal that devils know,—
 Jesus ! Thy son uphold !

VII.

But I will quell my doubts and fears,
And on where holy Sinai rears
 His form before my eyes,
For I can see above his head
A rim of growing glory spread,
 The light of Easter skies !

IX.

The Communion of Saints.

I.

THE mystery of mysteries !
Now let the pure in heart draw nigh,
While every pulse is beating high
With love and holy fear ;
For Christ hath risen at break of day,
And bids us from the world away
And haste to meet Him here.

II.

The mystery of mysteries !
The Angels and Archangels come
On wings of light from out their home
In ranks of glory wheeling :
Our souls shall mix and blend with theirs,
In loud thankofferings and prayers,
Before the Altar kneeling.

III.

The mystery of mysteries !
The Spirits that in dimness dwell
Deep in the Church invisible,
From doubt and care remote,—
They too shall keep the feast to-day,
And to their cells, though far away,
The hymn of joy shall float.

IV.

The mystery of mysteries !
Oh ! far and wide through all the earth
Emotions of unwonted mirth
And feeling strange shall be ;
And secret sounds shall come and go,
Harmonious as the throbbing flow
Of the mysterious sea.

V.

The mystery of mysteries !
The dead and living shall be one,
And thrills of fiery transport run
With sweetest power through all ;

For one in heart and faith are we,
And moulded one, our Head ! through Thee,
The Body Mystical !

VI.

The mystery of mysteries !
From east to west the world shall turn,
And stay its busy feet to learn
The musical vibration ;
While Saints and Angels high shall raise
In one vast choir the hymn to praise
The Feast of our Salvation.

X.

The Signs of the Times.

“When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”—ST. LUKE xviii. 8.

I.

THE days of old were days of might
In forms of greatness moulded,
And flowers of Heaven grew on the earth
Within the Church unfolded :
For grace fell fast as summer dew,
And Saints to giant stature grew.

II.

But one by one the gifts are gone
That in the Church resided,
And gone the Spirit’s living light
That on her walls abided,
When by our shrines He came to dwell
In power and presence visible.

III.

A blight hath past upon the Church,
Her summer hath departed,
The chill of age is on her sons,
The cold, and fearful-hearted ;
And sad, amid neglect and scorn,
Our Mother sits and weeps forlorn.

IV.

Narrow and narrower still each year
The holy circle groweth,
And what the end of all shall be
Nor man nor Angel knoweth :
And so we wait and watch in fear ;—
It may be that the Lord is near !

XI.

Oxford in Spring.

“Templa quam dilecta !”

I.

How gentle are the days that bring
The promise of the faithful year,
Sweet early pledges of the spring,
Sweetest while winter still is near ;
Like thoughts in time of sorrow given,
Filling the heart with glowing types of Heaven !

II.

The little buds upon the thorn
Are peeping from their pale green hood ;
Pink rows of almond-flowers adorn
With many a gem the leafless wood,
And gaily on the vernal breeze
Dance the light tassels of the hazel-trees.

III.

The early rose is blushing sweet
In yonder sunny sheltered place,
Where spring and winter seem to meet
And blend with wild fantastic grace,
And under skies of coldest blue
The crocus fills her yellow cup with dew.

IV.

The sun shines on the city walls,
The meadows fair, and elmy woods,
And o'er her grey and time-stained halls
Religion's quiet spirit broods,
And calls world-wearied men to come
And find within these stately aisles a home.

V.

The joy of holy hearts art thou,—
The jewel of our country dear !
The fount from whence fresh rivers flow
To pour their blessings far and near ;
Where still with purest incense rise
The steams of morn and evening sacrifice !

VI.

Thy hallowed bounds a precinct give
Where forms of ancient greatness stay,
Enduring truths that shall outlive
The jarring systems of a day ;
Therefore with men of evil will
Thou sitt'st, dear City, calm and fearless still !

VII.

And now, when all things round are bright,
Those voiceless towers so tranquil seem,
And yet so solemn in their might,
A loving heart could almost deem
That they themselves might conscious be
That they were filled with immortality !

XII.

The Storm is past.

I.

THE storm is past : the green hill-side
Is streaked with evening gleams,
Let out through rents in yon dark cloud,
Day's last and loveliest beams.

II.

Still clings the tempest's fleecy skirt
Round Fairfield's hollow crest,
Where glorious mists in many a fold
Of wavy silver rest.

III.

Deep imaged in the lake serene
The shadowy mountains lie :
Deeper than heaven itself the blue
Of that unreal sky.

IV.

Oh ! soft falls evening on the heart
With gnawing cares depreſt,
Feeding on all her quiet things,—
A Sacrament of rest !

V.

Sin-blighted though we are—yet still
Upon our weary souls,
Through hills and woods, through lakes and
streams,
A tide of glory rolls :

VI.

A brimming tide from Heaven that flows
Of freshness and of power,
And holy strength to nerve the heart
For duty's sterner hour.

XIII.

All Saints' Day.

1.

THE GATHERING OF THE DEAD.

THE day is cloudy ;—it should be so :
And the clouds in flocks to the eastward go ;
For the world may not see the glory there,
Where Christ and His Saints are met in the air.
There is a stir among all things round,
Like the shock of an earthquake underground,
And there is music in the motion,
As soft and deep as a summer ocean.
All things that sleep awake to-day,
For the Cross and the crown are won,
 The winds of spring
 Sweet songs may bring

Through the half-unfolded leaves of May;

But the breeze of spring

Hath no such thing

As the musical sounds that run

Where the anthem note by God is given,

And the Martyrs sing,

And the Angels ring

With the cymbals of highest Heaven.

In Heaven above, and on earth beneath,

In the holy place where dead men sleep.

In the silent sepulchres of death,

Where Angels over the bodies keep

Their cheerful watch till the second breath

Into the Christian dust shall creep—

In heights and depths and darkest caves,

In the unlit green of the ocean waves—

In fields where battles have been fought,

Dungeons where murders have been wrought—

The shock and the thrill of life have run :

The reign of the Holy is begun !

There is labour and unquietness

In the very sands of the wilderness,

In the place where rivers ran.

Where the Simoom blast

Hath fiercely past

O'er the midnight caravan.

From sea to sea, from shore to shore,

Earth travails with her dead once more.

In one long endless filing crowd,

Apostles, Martyrs, Saints, have gone,

Where behind yon screen of cloud

The Master is upon His Throne !

Only we are left alone !—

Left in this waste and desert place,

Far from our natural home ;

Left to complete our weary race,

Until His Kingdom come.

Oh, my God !—that we could be

Among that shining company !

But once a year with solemn hand

The Church withdraws the veil,

And there we see that other land,

Far in the distance pale.

While good church-bells are loudly ringing
All on the earth below,
And white-robed choirs with angels singing,
Where stately organs blow :
And up and down each holy street
Faith hears the tread of viewless feet,
Such as in Salem walked when He
Had gotten Himself the victory.
So be it ever year by year,
Until the Judge Himself be here !

2.

THE MIDDLE HOME.

The Dead—the mighty, quiet Dead !
Each in his moist and silent bed
Hath laid him down to rest,
While the freed spirit slowly fled
Unto the Patriarch's breast.
Perchance awhile it lingered near,
As loth to quit its earthly bier,

Until the funeral hymn was done,
And the Church closed upon her son.

There is a place where spirits come,

Beneath the shrine to live,
A mystic place, a middle home,
Which God to them doth give.

What mortal fancy can disclose
The secrets of their weird repose?

It is a quietness more deep
Than deadest swoon or heaviest sleep—
A slumber full of glorious dreams,
Of magic sounds, and broken gleams,

Outside the walls of heaven ;
So near, the Saints may hear the din
Of thousand Angel choirs within,
And some dear prospect too may win,—

As, in the light of even,
Long absent exiles may have seen
The home, the woods, the orchards green,
Wherein their childish time was spent,
Ere on their pilgrimage they went ;

And, as they look upon the show,
The thought of early love returns
Unto the straining eye that burns
With tears that age forbids to flow.

There then at Heaven's portal gate
The souls beneath the Altar wait—
The Altar whereon Christ was laid,
True Meat for all the living made,
And Shelter for the Dead !

Their bodies are not yet like His,
Nor pure, nor strong enough for bliss
Or love unmixed with dread.

They cannot brook the vision yet,
Those radiant lights that never set ;
And so the Son of Man hath thrown
His awful Veil o'er spirits lone ;
O'ershadowed by His Flesh they lie,
As though behind a charmed screen,
Hid from the piercing of the Eye
That may not look on things unclean !

Say, who are those that softly glide
Each pure and saintly soul beside,

Like Angels, only that they bear
More thought and sadness in their air,
As though some stain of earth did rest
Its pensive weight upon their breast,
And lodged a fearfulness within
That could not rise from aught but sin ?
Nor ever on their silent face
Doth gentle mirth leave any trace,
Save when their downcast eye doth rest
Upon the Symbol on their breast ;
Then are their features lit the while
With something like an earthly smile,
As though a thought were in their heart
Which it were rudeness to impart.
These are the righteous works of Faith,
Wrought in the fight with Sin and Death—
Dear shadows of each holy thing,
The goodly fruits and flowers that spring
From the rich Tree of Life ;
Alms-deeds and praise and vigils past
In penitential prayer and fast,

Boldness in faith, and wrongs forgiven,
And self-denying toils for heaven,
And gentleness in strife.

These follow all the souls that come
Unto their rest and middle home ;
And by their sides for ever stay
To witness at the solemn day,—
In fear as nigher still and nigher
They see the cleansing judgment-fire.

XIV.

Deep in the Holy Church.

“ Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.”—ACTS iv. 32.

I.

DEEP in the holy Church are left
Some lonely places still,
Where quiet hearts and gentle saints
This ancient love fulfil.

II.

And what have we in all the world
That we would call our own?
Our brightest transports are not ours
If they are felt alone.

III.

Brother ! I never kneel to pray
But I do pray for thee ;
And thou I know dost never kneel
But thou dost pray for me.

IV.

These many days thine open heart
Mine eyes with joy have seen ;
And often in its choicest crypts
My heart at prayer hath been.

V.

By day and night there comes to me
A fresh and fragrant balm ;
And well I know thine orisons
Have won for me that calm.

VI.

Thy cherished image lives with me,
And makes the day more bright ;
And pleasant is the thought of thee
Upon my bed by night.

VII.

They say we seek the hills and woods
For intellectual strife;
As if thy friend would rudely mar
Thy spirit's gentle life !

VIII.

Ah ! little do they deem how strong
The spell is o'er us thrown,—
The spell that takes two kindred hearts
And moulds them into one.

IX.

Yet still when we as humblest saints
Our feeble shinings give,
They shall take knowledge of us then
That we with Jesus live.

XV.

Memorials of a Happy Time.

"Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweet-
ness of a man's friend from the counsel of the soul."

PROVERBS xxvii. 9.



The Meeting.

TELL me, ye Winds and Waves ! what power compels

Souls far apart to be together brought,

That they may love each other,—spirits taught

To stoop and listen by Truth's ancient wells ;

Guiding their lives with the calm motion caught

From their pure earthborn murmurings—the swells

Of whose soft falling streams go chiming on,

Heard best by hearts that travel there alone !

One have I met—so meek a soul—that dwells

In his own lowly spirit's cloistered cells :

Him by that ancient mountain-rill I found,

Touched mid the heedless throng with holiest

spells,

Striving to catch the stream's low thrilling sound,

Where in a savage place it runneth underground.

II.

The Confessional.

Now thou hast seen my heart. Was it too near ?
Didst thou recoil from the o'erpowering sight ;
That vision of a scarred and seaméd soul ?
Ah ! yes : thy gentle eyes were filled with fear
When looks and thoughts broke out from my
controul,

Bursting themselves a road with fiercest might—
Wide-opening secret cells of foulest sin,
And all that lurks in that dark place within !
Well, be it so, dear friend ! it was but right
That thou shouldst learn where blossoms yet may
bless,

And where for ever now there must be blight.
Riven with burning passion's torrent course,
Shattered and splintered all with sin's mad force—
Thou saw'st my heart : and didst not love me less.

III.

The Lesson.

LISTEN—another strain!—I long had thought
The scourge austere and stern self-punishment
To school impatient spirits had been sent,
And hoped their task would long ere this be
wrought.

Man works in haste, for speed with him is might:
In depth and silence God's great works are laid,
As in foundation-stones, all dimly bright.
The world doth know it hath but one brief hour,
And hurries by while judgment is delayed;
And it is gifted with a fearful power
Of holding back its own dark day of doom:
But God keeps shrouded in His ancient gloom,
Watching things travel to His own vast will.
So He works on, and man keeps thwarting still.

The Vision.

THAT healthy wisdom did I late unfold
Out of a precious type to me endeared.
I saw an altar to the Graces reared,
Of chaste proportions, by a green way-side.
Trees of all sorts stood round it, gray and old,
Blending their various leaves with solemn pride.
A venerable shade it seemed to me,
Where neither gloom nor garish light could be.
Daily from off the shrine to azure heaven
The quiet incense of soft thought was given ;
And ever rose, as if on angel wings,
The breezelike scent of high imaginings,
Fragrant of glory I had never dreamed,
So modest and so low that little altar seemed.

The Teacher.

THIS was thy heart where I did fondly trace
The way that God had gone : in little things
And childish growths I found the hidden springs
Where He had put his virtue. Thy short race
In holy calm and evenness hath past.
Oh ! how unlike those gay and wayward hearts
That might in Athens rise to bear their parts
In the Greek torch-race : and with giddy haste
Wave their bright pine about, and quench its
blaze,
Types of their own wild course in after days !
Thy soul's most secret growings I have seen—
Ordered by God so quietly and slow,
That thou thyself, dear friend, dost scarcely know
Or what thou art or what thou mightst have been.

The two Rivers.

COME with me through these mountain-vales, and
see—

Two bravely-flowing streams this way have gone ;
Most musical their flowing is to me,
So I will take and moralize thereon.
One decks the eastern vale—the loveliest ;
The other dashes onward from the west.
They join in quiet fields : you scarce can know
Which was the first to join. So, as is meet,
The gentler nature doth the sterner greet,
Because its name is softer and more sweet :
And he, the elder, loves to have it so.
Then in a lake they blend their kindred flow,
And men do say, and so it ought to be,
That they in one bright stream pass onward to
the sea.

VII.

The younger River.

[THE ROTHAY.]

COME now and see yon orient vale outspread,
And mark the windings of my favourite rill ;
For the wan olive-lights are on the hill,
Dear autumn's choicest boon : and there is shed
A most surpassing glory on the stream,
Kindled just now by evening's purple gleam.
Yon lake with shady islands gave it birth,
To it yon English village doth belong,
And many a night the joyousness and mirth
Of its dear flow hath been my vesper song.
See how it peeps in meadows fringed with flowers,
Or nestles jealously mid leafy bowers,
As if it almost felt, and shunned to show
The gracefulness that makes men love it so.

VIII.

The elder River.

[THE BRATHAY.]

Now follow me to yonder gloomy hills
That to the westward rise : a thousand rills
Gush wildly from their rifted sides to form
That dark, romantic river's early course.

It is the nursling of the cloudy storm,
And carries somewhat of its mother's force
Along with it : leaping with one mad bound
Over a rocky fall. Yet are there found
Pools of most silent beauty, calm and deep ;
Though there, too, glittering foam-bells tell a tale
Of things before it reached that placid vale,
Where the new church o'erhangs its woodland
sweep.

Oh ! how these brooks with hidden meanings teem,
Which no one in the world but you and I would
dream !

IX.

The Preparation.

THE clouds lay folded on the mountain's brow,
A huge and restless curtain drooping low.
This way and that it waved with solemn swell,
And from behind it flakes of sunlight fell
On many a patch of redly withering fern,
Melting away upon them : far above
Vast shapes were seen, uncouth and horrible,
Masses of jagged rock that seemed to move,
Turning where'er the rolls of cloud did turn,
Piled up on high a grim and desolate Throne :
But no one was there that might sit thereon—
All preparation had been made for One
Who had not come. Ah ! surely we must say,
They looked for God being out on some great
work that day !

x.

The Wheels.

THERE are strange solemn times when serious men
Sink out of depth in their own spirit, caught
All unawares, and held by some strong thought
That comes to them, they know not how or when,
And bears them down through many a winding cell,
Where the soul's busy agents darkly dwell ;
Each watching by his wheel that, bright and bare,
Revolveth day and night to do its part
In building up for Heaven one single heart.
And moulds of curious form are scattered there,
As yet unused,—the shapes of after deeds ;
And veiled growths and thickly sprouting seeds
Are strewn, in which our future life doth lie
Sketched out in dim and wondrous prophecy.

XI.

The Glimpse.

OUR many deeds, the thoughts that we have
thought—

They go out from us stronging every hour ;
And in them all is folded up a power
That on the earth doth move them to and fro :
And mighty are the marvels they have wrought
In hearts we know not, and may never know.
Our actions travel and are veiled : and yet
We sometimes catch a fearful glimpse of one
When out of sight its march hath well-nigh gone,
An unveiled thing which we can ne'er forget !
All sins it gathers up into its course,
And they do grow with it, and are its force :
One day with dizzy speed that thing shall come,
Recoiling on the heart that was its home.

XII.

The Perplexity.

AND therefore when I look into my heart,
And see how full it is of mighty scheme,
Some that shall ripen, some be ever dreams;
And yet, though dreams, shall act a real part:
When I behold of what and how great things
I am the cause; how quick the living springs
That vibrate in me, and how far they go,—
Thought doth but seem another name for fear;
And I would fain sit still, and never rise
To meddle with myself, God feels so near.
And all the time He moveth, calm and slow
And unperplexed, though naked to His eyes,
A thousand thousand spirits pictured are
Kenned through the shroud that wraps the Heaven
of heavens afar!

XIII.

The Complaint.

I HEARD thee say that thou wert slow of speech ;
Thou didst complain thy words could never reach
The height of thy conceptions. Ah ! dear friend,
Envy me not, if thou art wise, this gift.
Fierce reckless acts and thoughts' unbridled range
And cherished passion that at times hath rocked
My soul to its foundations,—these did lift
Me into eloquence : 'twas sad to spend
So great a price, to win so poor a dower.
Thine is a deep clear mind : nor inward change
Nor outward visitation yet hath shocked
Thy heart into a consciousness of power.
So calm and beautiful thou art within,
That thou wilt scarce believe that power is sin.

XIV.

The Voice.

“ The people, therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered : others said, An Angel spake to Him.”—ST. JOHN, xii. 29.

A VOICE from ancient times comes up this way ;
Did ye not hear it—like a trumpet call ?
O with what startling accents doth it fall
On ears that love a softer siren sound !
To them like muttering thunder still it seems,
Though all the sky is open, free and gay.
Month follows month, and year doth grow to
year,
And the strong Voice keeps waxing yet more
clear.

The world is full of symptoms of decay,
Feverish and intermittent, struck with fear,
Starting unconsciously in savage dreams,
Like aged men with sickly opiates bound.
—It spake again : surely it cometh near,
Let us go out upon the tower, and hear !

The Temple.

“ Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost.”—1 COR. vi. 19.

COME, I have found a Temple where to dwell :
Sealéd and watched by Spirits day and night
Behind the Veil there is a crystal Well.
The glorious cedar pillars sparkle bright,
All gemmed with big and glistening drops of dew,
That work their way from out yon hidden flood
By mystic virtue through the fragrant wood,
Making it shed a faint unearthly smell.
And from beneath the curtain that doth lie
In rich and glossy folds of various hue
Soft showers of pearly light run streamingly
Over the chequered floor and pavement blue.
Oh ! that our eyes might see that Font of Grace,
But none hath entered yet his own heart’s Holy
Place.

XVI.

The Priest.

“ And the people waited for Zacharias.”—ST. LUKE, i. 21.

As morning breaks or evening shadows steal,
Duties and thoughts throng round the marble stair,
Waiting for Him who burneth incense there,
Till He shall send to bless them as they kneel.
Greater than Aaron is the mighty Priest
Who in that radiant shrine for ever dwells,
Brighter the stones that stud His glowing vest,
And ravishing the music of His bells
That tinkle as He moves. The golden air
Is filled with motes of joy that dance and run
Through every court, and make the temple one.
—The lamps are lit; 'tis past the hour of prayer,
And through the windows is their lustre thrown,
Deep in the Holy Place the Priest doth watch
alone.

XVII.

The Blessing.

THOU hast heard much at parting from thy friend ;
Now let thy pastor lodge within thine heart
One holy hermit thought ere thou depart !
I led thee once a tranquil watch to spend
Amid the wakeful dead. Faintly and near
The pulse of time within the low Church-tower
Did beat ; and they lay quiet round to hear,
Counting its throbs and waiting for their hour.
This thought I charge thee never to forget.
Kneel down, and I will bless thee ; I am yet
A boy as thou art, but I have the power.
Go thou in joy and peace, my brother dear !
Thou bearest now within thee night and day
What the world did not give and shall not take
away.

XVIII.

The Humiliation.

YES, Lord ! 'tis well my suffering should be deep;
So with unsparing hand fill Thou the cup
Of bitter thought, and I will drink it up,
And then lie calmly down, yet not to sleep :
But like a guilty child in penitence
When some unruly act hath first destroyed
Within his little soul the quiet sense
Of filial love and careless innocence ;
And, as he feels his bliss with fear alloyed,
He wakes, he knows not why, all night to weep.
I did not think my love was so intense
That it should have been sin ; yet ah ! my heart
Cannot without a thankless murmur part
From that all-heavenly dream it hath so long
enjoyed.

XIX.

The Haunted Place revisited.

I CAME again fair Esthwaite lake to view—
The place thy spirit haunts; while sun and
shower
In light and shade contended every hour,
And both were beautiful. The lake was still:
Rich autumn lights were grouped upon the hill
Mid purple heather and bright orange fern.
Oh what a scene was there! The scarlet hue
Of the wild cherry-tree did strangely turn
To mockery the alder's solemn gray:
And, as I wept outright, it seemed to say—
“ What art thou he that was so proud and
stern?
‘ Look at that silly furze all new and gay,
‘ Poor plant! ’tis budding forth and blossoming
‘ As if it thought one year could have a second
spring.”

The After-State.

A SPIRIT came upon me in the night,
And led me gently down a rocky stair
Unto a peopled garden, green and fair,
Where all the day there was an evening light.
Trees out of every nation blended there.
The citron shrub its golden fruit did train
Against an English elm : 'twas like a dream
Because there was no wind ; and things did seem
All near and big, like mountains before rain.
Far in those twilight bowers beside a stream
The soul of one who had but lately died
Hung listening, with a brother at his side ;
And no one spoke in all that haunted place,
But looked quietly into each other's face.

XVI.

To

I.

'Tis when we suffer gentlest thoughts
Within the bosom spring :
Ah ! who shall say that pain is not
A most unselfish thing ?

II.

Long ere I knew thee, men had said
That I must be thy friend,
While thou by Itchin's grassy bank
Thy summer hours did spend.

III.

So it came natural to me
To have thee for my brother :
And more and more each passing day
We grow into each other.

IV.

And I have looked upon thee now
With gaze so long and true,
That all things near and round thee seem
Touched with the selfsame hue.

V.

My very love for thy dear sake
Runs out on every side,
And joys with liberal waste to find
Its idols multiplied.

VI.

To charm my pain, soft thoughts of thee
Doth willing memory bring,
Fragrant as is the leafy smell
Of rain-washed woods in spring.

VII.

Yes—thou hast thrown on me once more
My boyhood's living glow,
And tears and smiles and childish joys
From their old fountains flow.

VIII.

Unlike, and yet how like, two wills
That mould so passing well,
As waves that meet and make a calm
Caught by each other's spell.

IX.

Both by their brother's heart do sit
To learn its mystic motion,
Blend as they listen, and forget
All the wild heaving ocean.

X.

Old age—what is it but a name
For burning love departed?
We too shall be for ever boys,
If we are loyal-hearted.

XVII.

The Holy Angels.

I.

ANGELS and Thrones and holy Powers
And Ministers of light—
God's primal sons and mystic bands
In various orders bright,
And hidden Splendours wheeling round
In circles infinite—

II.

Celestial priests and seraph kings
In links of glory twine :
And Spirits of departed men
In saintly lustre shine
With Angels dear that fold their wings
Above the awful Shrine—

III.

Chariots of living flame that fill
The mountain's hollow side,
Breezes that to the battle-field
Over the forest ride,
Spirits that from the Bridegroom come
To wait upon the Bride—

IV.

These are among us and around
In earth and sea and air,
At fast and feast and holy rite
And lonely vigil prayer,
Morning and noon and dead of night
Crowding the heavenly stair.

V.

In solemn hours and paths remote,
Where worldly sounds are still,
There comes to us from Spirits nigh
A contact pure and chill,
A touch that to the inmost sense
Runs with unearthly thrill.

VI.

Yet man will deem himself alone—
That earth so fair and wide
Was made for him to have unshared
His glory and his pride,
That he alone, supreme below,
To Heaven should be allied.

VII.

And wouldest thou grudge, poor selfish heart,
To share thy lonely sway,
And scorn the visitants that come
On earth with thee to stay—
The Beings meek and beautiful
That follow on thy way ?

VIII.

There's many a lake to Heaven looks up
With bright and earnest eye
Upon the solitary tops
Of mountains steep and high,
And many a plant and flower that bloom
Where man was never nigh.

IX.

All day and night the lovely clouds
In curious shapes are blending,
And coloured lights through forest bowers
Are every hour descending,
Where none are by but Angel forms
God's glorious road attending.

X.

Oh ! well it is that they for love
Of man's cold heart are weeping :
And it shall please me, **LORD !** to think,
While my dull eyes are sleeping,
Angels for thine eternal praise
Eternal watch are keeping !

XVIII.

The Rogation Days¹.

“Despise not thy mother when she is old.”

PROV. xxiii. 22.

I.

HEAVY and sad the Church must go :
Full weary are her latter days,
And she must hush the voice of praise
While tears of penance flow.

II.

And she must fast, though by her side
The Bridegroom yet on earth doth move ;
And fear must be instead of love
For her own children’s pride.

¹ The observation of the three Rogation Days as fasts was not introduced till the middle of the fifth century, by Mamerucus, Bishop of Ravenna, and has never obtained universally.

III.

Yet, holy Mother ! Lent is past :
And long ago the Easter sun
Into the middle sky hath run ;—
Wherfore this second fast ?

IV.

Mother ! with us the **LORD** doth bide ;
Yet but a little while He stays,—
Then for three dim and lonely days
Why keep us from His side ?

V.

He said we should not fast when He
Came down to live with us below :
Then, holy Mother ! why forego
Our ancient liberty ?

VI.

When thou wert in thy virgin prime,
Those forty days through all the earth
Thy heart did swell with festal mirth—
It was thy bridal time.

VII.

“ Talk not, my son, of early days :
My precious stones were passing fair,
My life was Sacrament and prayer,
My unity was praise.

VIII.

“ These glories now are well-nigh past :
My son ! the world is waxing strong ;
The day is hot ; the fight is long,
And therefore do I fast.

IX.

“ And ye are weak, and cannot bear
Full forty days of Easter mirth :
And nought is left unstained of earth,
But penance, fast, and prayer.

X.

“ Oh ! weary is my stay below ;
And thus with strong and earnest cry,
As each Ascension-day glides by,
I fain with Him would go.

XI.

“ Then watch and fast, like saints of yore ;
These three new days perchance may bring
The earlier advent of our King,
And we shall fast no more !

XIX.

Laud's Devotions.

IN stillest prayers and hours of holy thought
 Thy spirit, dearest of the Martyr band !
 Long time hath been with gravest influence
 fraught :
 And oft, when sin is nigh, I feel thy hand—
 A touch most cold and pure, of deepest dread,
 Chastising dreams by youth and pleasure bred.
 Teach me (for thou didst learn the lesson well
 In hardness and in suffering) to restrain
 Unquiet, fretful hopes, and weak disdain
 Of worldly men who will not understand
 The zeal and love that in such fierceness dwell.
 Oh ! Master, I would fear thee still, though pain
 Her saintly power with filial joy doth blend,
 And, were I holier, I would love thee as a friend.

XX.

St. Mary's at Night.

I.

DEAR Mother ! at whose angel-guarded shrine
I oft have waited for my daily Bread,
How full thou art of impulses divine
And memories deep and dread !

II.

Steeped in the shades of night thou art unseen,
All save thy fretted tower, and airy spire
That travels upward to yon blue serene,
Like a mighty altar-fire ;

III.

For wavy streams of moonlight creep and move
Through little arches and o'er sculptures rare,
So lifelike one might deem that Angels love
To come and cluster there.

IV.

Oh ! it is well that thou to us shouldst be
Like the mysterious bush, engirt with flame
Yet unconsumed, as she that gifted thee
With her high virgin name.

V.

And like the Church that hath for ages stood
Within the world, and always been on fire ;
Albeit her hidden scent, like cedar-wood,
Smells sweetest on the pyre.

VI.

The city sleeps around thee, save the few
That keep the vigil, with their spirits bare,
As Gideon's fleece, to catch the cold fresh dew
That falls on midnight prayer.

VII.

Why doth thy lonely tower tell forth the time,
When men nor heed nor hear the warning sound ?
Why waste the solemn music of thy chime
On hearts in slumber bound ?

VIII.

It is because thou art a church, to tell
How fast the end of all things comes along,
And, though men hear thee not, thy voice doth swell
Each night more clear and strong :

IX.

Content the few that watch should hear, and feel
Secure their Mother doth not, cannot sleep ;
And, as they hear, the gracious dew doth steal
Into their soul more deep.

X.

Or some young heart, that hath been kept awake
By chance or by his guardian Angel's skill,
Some serious thoughts into himself may take
From sounds so dread and still.

XI.

If there be none to hear, no hymn of praise
Or voice of prayer to join thy chant be given,
There is no sleep above, and thou mayst raise
Thy patient chimes to Heaven.

xii.

The Church hath bid me watch to this lone hour,
Though sleep hath long pressed on me heavily ;
Yet could I kneel all night beside thy tower,
To learn such love of thee !

XXI.

College Chapel.

A SHADY seat by some cool mossy spring,
 Where solemn trees close round, and make a
 gloom,
 And faint and earthy smells, as from a tomb,
 Unworldly thoughts and quiet wishes bring :
 Such hast thou been to me each morn and eve ;
 Best loved when most thy call did interfere
 With schemes of toil or pleasure, that deceive
 And cheat young hearts ; for then thou mad'st me
 feel
 The holy Church more nigh, a thing to fear.
 Sometimes, all day with books, thoughts proud
 and wild
 Have risen, till I saw the sunbeams steal
 Through painted glass at evensong, and weave
 Their threefold tints upon the marble near,
 Faith, prayer, and love, the spirit of a child !

XXII.

College Hall.

STILL may the spirit of the ancient days
 Rest on our feasts, nor self-indulgence strive
 Nor languid softness to invade the rule,
 Manly, severe, and chaste—the hardy school
 Wherein our mighty fathers learnt to raise
 Their souls to Heaven, and virtue best could thrive.
 They, who have felt how oft the hour is past
 In idle, worldly talk, would fain recall
 The brazen Eagle that in times of yore
 Was wont to stand in each monastic hall ;
 From whence the Word, or some old Father's lore,
 Or Latin hymns that spoke of sin and death
 Were gravely read ; and lowly-listening faith
 In silence grew, at feast as well as fast.

XXIII.

College Garden.

SACRED to early morn and evening hours,
Another chapel reared for other prayers,
And full of gifts,—smells after noon-day showers,
When bright-eyed birds look out from leafy bowers,
And natural perfumes shed on midnight airs,
And bells and old church-clocks and holy towers,
All heavenly images that cluster round.
The rose, and pink acacia, and green vine
Over the fretted wall together twine,
With creepers fair and many, woven up
Into religious allegories, made
All out of strange Church meanings, and inlaid
With golden thoughts, drunk from the dewy cup
Of morns and evenings spent in that dear ground !

XXIV.

College Library.

A CHURCHYARD with a cloister running round
And quaint old effigies in act of prayer,
And painted banners mouldering strangely there
Where mitred prelates and grave doctors sleep,
Memorials of a consecrated ground !

Such is this antique room, a haunted place
Where dead men's spirits come, and angels keep
Long hours of watch with wings in silence furled.
Early and late have I kept vigil here :
And I have seen the moonlight shadows trace
Dim glories on the missal's blue and gold,
The work of my monastic sires that told
Of quiet ages men call dark and drear,
For Faith's soft light is darkness to the world.

XXV.

The Life of the Living.

THE whole world lies beneath a spell—

 A charm of dreadest power—

And life hath some new miracle

 Worked for it every hour.

Hast thou ever been on a misty night

 In a deep and solemn dale,

When the firs, like spirits, stand upright

 In a soft, transparent veil,

While the moon with rings of muffled light

 Hath girdled her chariot pale ?

Hast thou ever sat on a mountain-brow

When the sun was bright and the wind was low,

And gazed on the groups of silent wood

That hang by the brink of a crystal flood,

When the wind starts up from his hidden lair,
Like a thing refreshed by sleep,
On the scene so summer-like and fair,
And the quietness so deep ?

The far-off pass and the broken fell
With a hoarse and hollow murmur swell
As the giant rides along :
He comes with sceptre bare to break
The pageant mirrored in the lake ;
And the whole forest depths to shake
With fury loud and strong.

He hath bent the poplar as he past,
As the tempest bends the tall ship-mast ;
He hath twisted the boughs of the lofty ash,
And the old oak moaned beneath his lash.
And yet to thee like some strange dream
The wild wind's savage sport doth seem,
For thou art still on thy mountain brow,
With the sun all bright and the wind all low !

Ah ! such at best is this weak life,
A mournful and mysterious strife,
Where each man to his neighbour seems
Like the stirring forms in motley dreams ;

And shadows fall from cloudless skies,

And lights in darkness gleam,

And endless are the mysteries

Of this unbroken dream.

And we gaze as dreamers have done of yore

On a sight they think they have seen before ;

And the far-off hills, and the neighbouring woods

And the gleaming pools of the winding floods,

Are blent in the sunset's misty hue,

When colour and distance are both untrue.

To the eye of mortal it may not be

To look on his own soul,

But like a dim half-hidden sea

Before him it doth roll.

It is green as the green earth's sunny grass,

It is blue as the bluest sky ;

It is black as night when the tempests pass,

And the snow-white sea-birds cry.

The weary billow hath no soft sleeps,

For its colour and change are given

Not from the heart of its beating deeps,

But fall from the face of heaven.

When the day is fair, and the gale at sleep,

There are marvellous things that lie

Full many and many a fathom deep,

Moving and resting uncertainly :—

Things tinted, dark, and bright,

Brave jewels seen

Through the solid green,

Gleaming and giving light.

And after the storm, when the summer calm

Drops down on the sea like a holy charm,

When the clouds on high

Float quietly,

Like Angels winnowing by,—

We see by the dawn that the furrowed shore

With broken things is strewn all o'er,

From the hollow ocean brought ;

Quaint carved works man never wrought,

And plants earth never bore,

New metals torn from their ancient bed,

And the wave-bleached bones of the unknown dead.

The beach that we scan

Is the Soul of Man

With the wrecks of its former being—

With the tokens dread

That the life which is fled

Is blent with the life that is fleeing !

XXVI.

The Mountains.

“Their gods are gods of the hills ; therefore they were stronger than we.”—1 KINGS xx. 23.

LET none but priests or lowly men draw nigh
Unto the lofty mountains, to invade
The awful sanctuary God hath built
Upon their desert sides. There was a time,
Ere the unholy stain of blood had flushed
The sunny green of the young virgin earth,
When He did walk with men in shady bowers
And innocent gardens. But when sin grew bold,
The jealous God withdrew unto the hills :
And the bright mists that moved upon the plain,
To gladden and keep fresh the heart of earth,
Were gathered up to Him, and hung in folds
Of glorious cloud before His mountain Throne ;

And everlasting barrenness was bid
To take the hills unto itself, that He
Might have a solitude wherein to dwell.

Behold how He hath gifted this His stern
And sacred dwelling-place. Tempests and storms
And the mysterious voices of loud winds,
A thousand lights of beauty, so intense
They make men weep for love of them, and shades
That move obedient to conceal from us
The path of some dear Angel, and o'er all
Bridges of rainbow thrown from peak to peak
In mystic arches, signs of covenant :
And the blue skies are bid by Him to stoop
Unto the mountain-top, that earth may blend
With Heaven ; and alway from their pierced sides
The music of ten thousand springs is heard,
Gushing with water—holiest element,
Wherein the power of our New Birth is laid :
Fed ever from the dews of Heaven that fall
When night is coldest ; and free liberal airs
That roam about the mountains, and that come
We know not whence, move o'er the pool unseen,

Like the pure Dove Who broods above the Font.
—Fresh are they, though no grateful shade is nigh,
Fresh as the wells that stand in natural rock
In summer woods or violet-scented grove,
With lowly flowers all round, and forest-breaths
Just come to dimple their still surfaces,
And now and then to scatter the frail leaves
From off the briar-rose that hangs above.

And here and there, far in the lonely glens,
Huge memory-peopled forests stretch along ;
Amid whose glorious tangled aisles, and choirs
Closed in with leafy pinnacles, and shafts
Of tall light trees down which the sunbeam plays,
Our holy sires were taught by God to build
Their venerable Churches, so that He
Might come once more from the eternal hills
To dwell by shrines that mortal hands had reared,
Albeit the pattern of the Holy Place
Was shown them on the mountain's wooded side !

On the high places of the Holy Church,
Strongholds of prayer and lonely steeps of faith,
Rest the first lights of hope, when all around

Is dark and dreary tumult. Savage wastes
Of black and angry waters rolled along.
But the strong breath of Him Who brooded once
Upon the shapeless seas, closed up the skies
And sealed the fountains of the bursting deep.
When Noah from his single lattice gazed,
The watery gleams of the returning sun
Smiled sadly on the mountain-peaks that rose,
Like islands of the Blest, happy and green.
Unto a mountain-top by impulse drawn,
On Ararat the weary Ark did rest,
Safe anchored there within the rocky veil.
Then were the shades dispelled, and earth was
 free,
And Stars and Angels shouted round the Throne,
And the victorious Sun broke from the East
 into the sky, beneath a glorious arch
 Wreathed with triumphal colours, and the Earth
 sent up a steam of odorous sacrifice
 into the Threefold Majesty in Heaven !
These are the marvels that of right belong
 unto the mountains. So it came to pass

The children of the old dark faiths went up
To worship there, and lit their altar fires
Upon the even cone of some green hill,
Whose very shape seemed pregnant to their eyes
With an unwonted presence, or dim trace
Of Him they sought. Alas! they little knew
Whence their blind worship came, what Angel
forms

Went often with them to the bleak hill-tops.

And so the spiritual Persian climbed
The lofty steep, to feel his God diffused
In the unbounded blue that was around,
As though the mountain-wind, that did embrace
Himself and all, had been the breath of God!

Oh! come then to these gifted Altars, come!
They will unteach thee pride, and gird thee round
With types and mysteries of things above,
And wrap thy spirit up in many a fold
Of awful visions. Come and wander now
Among their solemn passes, far withdrawn
From every sound except the waterfall,
And eagle's voice, high up among the clouds—

Wondrous as that dread bird that waited once
In Patmos, when the saintly exile saw
The holy Church pass on from east to west,
Like the bright moon, through shadows manifold.

How fixed and calm they look! Yet on their
sides,

Whether by stream or flame impressed, fierce scars
And rugged seams are left as if to tell
Of some primeval change. They make the hills
Look old and hoary, and yet not the less
Unchangeable: as if they meant to show
That change, which does efface men's works and
ways,

Doth only wear God's footprints deeper in,—
For fire and flood are but His chariot-wheels.

Behold the heights man's foot hath never trod!
A whole weight of prophecy doth rest thereon.
In ancient days the Spirit dwelt in hearts
That knew His presence: in these latter times
Men prophesy, and know it not; they strew
The precious treasure up and down, like leaves,
And the wise winds, which are God's Spirit, take

And gather them for Him,—they are not lost.
Thus from all seers, both new and old, like clouds
Drifting in little flocks on autumn days
To one dark treasure-house of storm, each year
The weight of prophecy doth grow, and men
Behold its varying outline, bright and dark,
And watch its swelling form with awe, as though
It could no more contain the living fire
Which hath already shone in palest gleams
Through many a rent and at each radiant fringe.

Come, then, unto the mountains—sit with me
Among this spotted fern ; for God's decrees
Are wrapped about them like a mantle : they
Whom He foreknew perchance may lift the veil,
And see His depths within the blessed light
Which kindles love and yet doth not increase
Our knowledge. Come, then, to this trickling
spring,

It will remind thee of thy morning dew.
Let the huge mountains throw their rugged arms
Around thee, while their virtue goeth out
Into thy heart with hidden Sacraments !

XXVII.

She is bright and young.

I.

SHE is bright and young, and her glory comes
Of an ancient ancestry,
And I love for her beauty's sake to gaze
On the light of her full dark eye.

II.

She is gentle and still, and her voice is as low
As the voice of a summer wind,
And falseness and fickleness have not left
One stain on her girlish mind.

III.

I felt the wild dream creep over like sleep,
More strangely each day I stayed,
And in four short weeks my heart was bound up
In the heart of that high-born maid.

IV.

O the stir of love and its beating thrills !—
I never had known its power ;
So I shut my eyes and went down the stream,
And might have been there to this hour :

V.

But she sung light songs at a solemn time,
And the spell was gone for ever ;
And who shall say 'twas a trivial thing
That delicate chain to sever ?

XXVIII.

The Pic-Nic.

I.

A LADY a party of pleasure made,
And she planned her scheme right well ;
And early and late this party filled
The head of the demoiselle.

II.

It rained all day and it rained all night,
It rained when morning broke,
It rained when the maiden went to sleep,
And it rained when she awoke.

III.

Peevish and fretful the maiden grew
When the hour of noon was gone ;
But the merry clouds knew nothing of that,
And the rain kept pouring on.

IV.

The weather has got no business with us,
And we have none with the weather,
And temper and weather are different things,
But they always go together.

V.

Oh ! anger and beauty, my lady dear,
Will never agree to share
That little white brow that lifts its arch
Through the parting of thy hair.

VI.

The mists are strewn all over the hills,
And the valleys are ringing with floods,
And the heavy drops on the flat broad leaves
Are making strange sounds in the woods.

VII.

Angels are round thee and Heaven's above,
And thy soul is alive within ;
Shall a rainy day and a cloudy sky
Make a Christian heart to sin ?

VIII.

O wait for the sunset's dusky gold
On the side of yon mountain glen,
And seek the lone seat where the foxgloves grow,
And weep for thy folly then.

XXIX.

At a Child's Baptism.—Ambleside.

I.

DEAR Christian child ! was it the power
That in those gifted waters came,
Which stirred thee at that solemn hour,
And thrilled through all thy trembling frame ?

II.

Oh ! was it keen and fierce, the smart
When the old root within thee died,
And the new nature in thy heart
Rose like the swell of Ocean's tide ?

III.

Yes—in the dawn of thy new birth
There came some spiritual fears,
Faint gleams of after-things,—that earth
Might pay the first-fruits of her tears.

IV.

Sweet penitent! all lovely things
Are for their brightness full of fear;
And strange would seem those angel-wings
That came and made soft motions near.

V.

And yet the Cross did hush thy cries,
When thou within mine arms didst lie
Quiet and sealed for sacrifice
Unto the Holy Trinity.

VI.

And such a smile sat on thy mouth,
While from that Token's fourfold might,
From East and West, from North and South,
Great visions broke upon thy sight.

VII.

And such a look came from thine eyes
Through lashes fringed with Christian dew—
Wonder and hope and mirth did rise
Up from those wells of heavenly blue.

VIII.

Now thou art consecrate, fair thing !
A Church where sinners have not prayed,
A shrine where only Angels sing,
Another stone in Zion laid !

XXX.

Birth-day Thoughts.

June 28, 1838. A. S.

THE FEAST OF ST. IRENÆUS. THE VIGIL OF ST. PETER.

THE CORONATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

I.

It was a day of mingled joys and fears
Blending like light and shade,
And boyish smiles with lingering sweetness played
Through penitential tears.

II.

It was a feast whereon soft memories
Of an old saint do stay,—
Of one who came bearing the Cross this way
From his own eastern skies.

III.

It was the eve of a high festival—
A day of serious hours,
For grief that one all full of gifts and powers
So deep in sin should fall.

IV.

It was the day whereon a Sovereign knelt
Before the Altar high,
And through the realm was heard one loyal cry,
One beating heart was felt.

V.

And thoughtful men were startled at the sound,
And good men fell to prayer,
For with the glory and the pageant rare
Shadows were gathering round.

VI.

There is a well, a willow-shaded spot,
Cool in the noontide gleam,
With rushes nodding in the little stream,
And blue forget-me-not

VII.

Set in thick tufts along the bushy marge
With big bright eyes of gold,
And glorious water-plants, like fans, unfold
Their blossoms strange and large.

VIII.

That wandering boy, young Hylas, did not find
Beauties so rich and rare,
Where swallow-wort and pale-bright maiden's hair
And dog-grass greenly twined.

IX.

A sloping bank ran round it like a crown,
Whereon a purple cloud
Of dark wild hyacinths, a fairy crowd,
Had settled softly down.

X.

And dreamy sounds of never-ending bells
From Oxford's holy towers
Came down the stream, and went among the flowers
And died in little swells.

XI.

There did I keep my birth-day feast, with all
These gentle things around,
While their soft voices rising from the ground
Unto my heart did call.

XII.

It is not good to be without a home,—
Young hearts should not be free :
Yet household thoughts have long been closed to me
Within my father's tomb.

XIII.

And I have roamed through places fair and good,
Like a wild bird that drops
To rest somewhere among the thousand tops
Of a broad fir-wood.

XIV.

My love hath strewn in many a youthful breast
Fancies of tender mould,
And I have memories among the old
In their eternal rest.

XV.

Sunny and wild all earthly things do seem,
Like an enchanter's show,
And yet it frets me all the while to know
That this is but a dream.

XVI.

I cannot burst the fetters of the spell:—

The silvery light of mirth

Streams from within me over all the earth,

As from an endless well.

XVII.

So bright of late the unsetting sun hath played,

Its evening must be near,

When Hope shall win fresh loveliness from fear,

And Memory from shade.

XVIII.

Still by old hills or abbey's ruined shrine

Shall love my footsteps bring—

Dear homes, where friendship set me gathering

These wild-flower thoughts of mine.

XXXI.

To G. S. S.

I.

DEAR Friend ! I have a dread and glorious home,
Just where two inland rivers gently meet,
And the young Cherwell's haunted waters come,
Isis, their queen, to greet.

II.

Far in the woodland heart of this green isle
To their own banks those streams are tinkling
now,
Where many a holy church and gorgeous pile
Throng in to hear their flow.

III.

But I have yet another home as fair,
Though my sweet southern streams are far away,
And two wild mountain rills are meeting there
As musical as they.

IV.

And are there not Church thoughts and feelings
here
Scattered, like flowers, on Loughrigg's sunny
brow,
And hopes to bless and memories to cheer
In Rothay's summer flow?

V.

Yes—by a hundred streamlets' wayward turns
My heart hath spent some hours of Sunday
rest,
And watched those pastoral things, the young
green ferns,
Unbend from earth's cold breast.

VI.

Oh! for thine own dear sake those things shall be
Marvellous types and symbols of my vow,
And with their lessons dread soft love for thee
Shall mingle fondly now.

VII.

Often shall they in hours of pensive thought
 Give up the secret charms that in them lie,
 And all thy sacred image shall be brought
 To fancy's yearning eye :

VIII.

The light, the power, the unsettled fires that play
 Among the sleepless glancings of thine eyes,
 Thy thoughts and things of beauty, which betray
 The heart from whence they rise.

IX.

If in thy spring the gems of Heaven be set,
 Like spotted fern-flowers in their first pale green,
 Oh ! shade them from the too bright world, nor let
 Their fragile bloom be seen.

X.

So shall the gifted suns of summer tide
 Their hidden power and loveliness unfold,
 And he, that loves thee, with a pastor's pride,
 Shall mark their autumn gold !

XXXII.

A Dream of Blue Eyes.

I LEFT thee when the midnight bell had tolled,
Full of fresh hopes and feelings : in thine eyes
All night perpetual meanings did unfold
Quick turns of thought and kindling sympathies.
Still those blue eyes looked at me through my sleep,
Changed by the power of dreams to fearful things.
They bore me far away, where evening flings
Her gorgeous blue on Atlas : they did sweep
Into the bluer sky, where comets blaze
And golden creatures live in starry rays.
Onward they went where filmy mist-wreaths creep
About the rolling moon ; and fell with me
Into the sunless caverns of the sea,
Where spirits all of blue into my soul did gaze !

XXXIII.

KESWICK, August 3, 1838.

I KNEW three sisters, who by haunted rills
And hill-side places gathered rarest flowers ;
But, when apart, and in their lonely hours,
The brightest things that bloomed upon the hills
Were dull : for love alone the spell hath given
Unto the green of earth, the blue of heaven !
So hath it been with me : I cannot think
Save in another's heart : I cannot drink
Of my own fountains but in others' eyes,
When I can see myself reflected there
With an ideal beauty ; and can rise,
Like a freed slave, with spirit keen and bare
From the damp cells and loathsome bonds of sin,
Which, but for love, would fetter me within.

XXXIV.

KESWICK, August 3, 1838.

Some fall in love with voices, some with eyes,
Some men are linked together by a tear ;
Others by smiles ; many who cannot tell
What time the Angel passed who left the spell.
It comes to us among the winds that rise
Scattering their gifts on all things far and near.
The fields of unripe corn, the mountain lake,
And the great-hearted sea—all things do take
Their glory and their witchery from winds :
All save the few black pools the woodman finds
Far in the depths of some unsunny place,
Which stand, albeit the happy winds are out
In all the tossing branches round about,
As silent and as fearful as a dead man's face.

XXXV.

Castle-Hill, Keswick.

“We put the sun to bed with our talk.”

Greek Anthology.

I.

COME let us gather here upon the hill
The noble hearts that yet beat pure and high,
And, while the lake beneath our feet is still,
Sweetly our speech may run on chivalry
And feats of arms and old crusading days
And ladye-love and minstrel’s generous praise.

II.

For we have wept o’er many a lonely place
And moorland village with a knightly name,
And we have loved with wise regrets to trace
The still unfaded relics of their fame.
Yon sun that sinks o’er Solway’s distant bay
Sets not more proud and glorious than they.

III.

Oh, then, while round Blencathra's haunted crest
The purple folds of summer twilight wind,
Spirits of feudal memory shall rest
With spells of dearest awe upon my mind ;
And there shall ride full gallantly and fast
Pageants and shades of the romantic past !

IV.

Sweet to the brow the wind of evening blows,
Sweet to the sight are evening's golden gleams,
Sweetest of all are they where Greta flows,
And Glenderaterra and the nameless streams,
Lonely and beautiful, where summer day
Fades o'er yon Cumbrian mountain far away.

V.

The clouds that build wild structures up on high
Shall mould themselves to some baronial hall,
And the stray mist that wanders loosely by
Be changed to a gigantic seneschal ;
The wind that o'er the battlements doth float
Shall sound from thence an elfin warder's note.

VI.

But, when the last pale glow is on the heights,
The dream may shift unto a maiden's bower,
Where every lattice streams with festal lights,
And crimson pennons wave on every tower,
Where ladies welcome back their knights again
From the far hunting field or battle-plain.

VII.

And by my side the page of Monstrelet
With all its lifelike forms shall be unrolled,
And he, with eye undimmed and hair of gray,
The chivalrous old Canon, shall unfold,
As in my boyish hours, his own dear lore,
Bright with the tints that shone in times of yore.

VIII.

Oh, in his boyhood's best and purest days
Who hath not gathered round old Froissart's
knee,
Like children round a father, in whose lays
Strange things were told with quaint and earnest
glee,

Prizing each year his well-known strains the more,
When we have heard them ten-times told before?

IX.

Come, then, and we will make a mimic tale:—

The store of legendary things that lie
Far in the woods of many a Cumbrian vale
Shall weave for us the mingled destiny
Of a young knight and of a templar bold,
In those most gorgeous Chronicles untold.

XXXVI.

The Wren.

I.

THERE is a bay, all still and lone,
And in the shade one broad grey stone
Where at the evening hour
The sun upon the water weaves
Motions of light among the leaves
Of a low-hanging bower :

II.

And one old sycamore that dips
Into the stream its dark-green tips,
And drinks all day and night :
And opposite, the mountain high
Doth intercept the deep blue sky
And shuts it out from sight.

III.

Last year it was my haunted seat,
And every evening did I meet
 A grave and solemn Wren :
He sate and never spoke a word ;
A holy and religious bird
 He seemed unto me then.

IV.

I thought, perchance, that sin and strife
Might in a winged creature's life
 Be somehow strangely blent :
So hermit-like he lived apart,
And might be in his little heart
 A woodland penitent !

V.

Deceitful thing ! into the brook,
Hour after hour, a stedfast look
 From off his perch was sent ;
And yet I thought his eyes too bright,
Too happy for an anchorite
 On lonely penance bent.

VI.

Ah ! yes—for long his nest hath been
Behind yon alder's leafy screen
By Rothay's chiming waters :
Two rapid years are run, and now
This monk hath peopled every bough
With little sons and daughters.

VII.

I will not blame thee, Friar Wren,
Because among stout-hearted men
Some truant monks there be ;
And, if you could their names collect,
I rather more than half suspect
That I should not be free.

VIII.

Erewhile I dreamed of cloistered cells,
Of gloomy courts and matin bells,
And painted windows rare ;
But common life's less real gleams
Shone warm on my monastic dreams,
And melted them to air.

IX.

My captive heart is altered now ;
And, had I but one little bough
 Of thy green alder-tree,
I would not live too long alone,
Or languish there for want of one
 To share the nest with me !

XXXVII.

Furness Abbey.

AH, SYDNEY!—as we journeyed to the main,
Visions of old Byzantium worked in thee;
Thy talk was of the glorious Osmanli:—
O how it rose like a bewildering strain
Of oriental music—paused again—
And changed unto the savage glens of pine
Which cradled thee! and yet the twilight power
Of English scenes, most felt at that still hour,
Some words of dearest rapture then could win,
As we did walk by Leven's tranquil side.
Now, as thy heart is fondly pressed to mine
In this Cistercian chapter-house, the pride
Of old ancestral things awakes,—the tide
Of English blood is rising fast within.

XXXVIII.

On the Heights near Devoke Water.

August 7, 1838.

DREARY and grey the twilight hour came on,
 Duddon was sounding in his wooded vale ;
 And through the ferns and round each hollow stone
 The spirit of the chill night-breeze did wail.
 With low and piteous moaning did it swell,
 Like a poor ghost, upon the shaggy fell !—
 When, as we rode, the sun came round and stood
 On the hill-top—an altar all of gold :
 Twisting in gorgeous coils, like a huge flood,
 The crimson steam along the valley rolled.
 Rain-drops, like gems, upon the heath were seen,
 And the whole earth was hid in golden green,
 O it was well our hearts within us quailed,—
 The throne of the Eternal was unveiled !

XXXIX.

The Groves of Penshurst.

THE groves of Penshurst are a haunted place ;
There is a spirit and a presence there
Of one departed ; and the brooding air
Is charged with powers of old ancestral grace.
Thou art a worthy son of that great sire :
Though there be doubt and peril, while the fire
Of youth burns in thee ! Let the cherished dread
Of that most knightly-hearted Sydney rest,
Like a dear master's hand, upon thy breast.
Brother ! great minds are built, great souls are fed
In stedfast discipline and silent fear.
When from this rule thine impulse would depart,
A voice from Sydney's tomb shall whisper near,
And ring wild trumpet-notes within thy heart !

XL.

The Iconoclast.

WHENCE comes this sinking heart, these failing
powers ?

Something hath touched my thoughts : they have
no life,

And stir, like sickly things, in idle strife,
And madness haunts me all these midnight hours.

Friend ! thou hast done it : thou hast broken down
All mine old images, and didst uncrown

The glorious things that reigned within my heart,
Because thou art more glorious. Hear me, then :—

If ever thou dost love me less, thou art
A curse, a blight, a marvel among men !

The spirit thou wert proud to call thine own,
Still round thy thoughts, a broken wreck, shall
cling

And sit, upbraiding thee, a crownless king
In the poor ruined heart that thou wouldest leave
so lone.

XLI.

Three Happy Days.

I.

THREE happy days we had been out
Among the awful hills,
Learning their secrets by the sides
Of dark, untrodden rills.

II.

We had companions all the day—
Rainbows and silver gleams ;
And quiet rivers all the night
Did mingle with our dreams.

III.

We spoke of great and solemn things,
Like earnest-minded men,
And often rode unheedingly
Through many a wooded glen.

IV.

We talked about the early Church—
Her martyrs keen and bold,
And what perchance might now befall
The same dear Church grown old.

V.

We went into each other's heart
And rifled all the treasure
That books and thinking had laid up
In academic leisure.

VI.

And now we are so wearied out
With all this high debate,
We have not mentioned once to-night
The name of Church or State.

VII.

We pulled each other's hair about,
Peeped in each other's eyes,
And spoke the first light silly words
That to our lips did rise.

VIII.

A pair of little brothers so
In thoughtless play might lie—
Yet they could not less thoughtful be,
Dear Friend ! than you and I !

XLII.

Stern Friend!

STERN Friend ! with what a passionate eloquence
And deep voice thou didst plead,
Till thy words cut, like knives, through every
sense,

Making my heart to bleed !

The spirit of old times went from thee there,
As lightning bold and keen,
And still unhealed the seams and furrows, where
That lightning passed, are seen.

Alas ! it was a most unworthy dream
That with my youth had grown,—
An earthly lure with a false winning gleam
Of Heaven about it thrown.

'Twas a brave thought to think that thou couldst
 tear
 The idol from its shrine,
And rear a nobler, purer image there
 Than that old love of mine.
Still, as thy hurried gesture waxed more fierce,
 My thoughts drew further in,
Shrinking from that quick eye which seemed to
 pierce
 The last thin veil of sin.
I watched thee like an abject, guilty thing,
 And wept with shame and fear,
Whilst thou didst lay thine hand on me, and
 bring
 The gleaming Cross more near ;
And my whole being quailed with agony,
 And writhed with burning smart,
When thou didst lift its bright, sharp edge on
 high,
 And plant it in my heart. *

Friend ! I am conquered now, and all my powers
 With holier impulse burn,

And yet I dare not trust myself when hours
Of languid ease return.

Then do I envy wild sea-birds that float,

And wish that we could be

Rocking for ever in a little boat

On some blue sunny sea :

And I would fain be dreaming, while the tide

Of active change doth roll,

That we at anchor and at ease might ride

Safe in each other's soul.

It may not be : I and my dreams must part,—

Part in the blood that flowed,

Where the stern Cross ran deepest in my heart,

Tearing its cruel road.

That pool of blood shall stand for ever there

Where the dread sign took root,

So shall the Cross have plants and blossoms rare

Grow up around its foot.

The watch-tower steps are fallen to decay,

Broken in every stone,

And it is perilous to wind one's way

To that high place alone.

But, wert thou with me there, the wildest night
Would not seem dark or long ;
And we would sing old Psalms till morning light
Broke in upon our song.
And should these rebel-dreams of earth arise
Against my hardy vow,
Then should I dread a friend that would chastise
So rough and dear as thou !

XLIII.

To a Little Boy.

DEAR Little One, and can thy mother find
In those soft lineaments, that move so free
To smiles or tears, as holiest infancy
About thy heart its glorious web doth wind,
A faithful likeness of my sterner mind ?
Ah ! then there must be times unknown to me
When my lost boyhood, like a wandering air,
Comes for a while to pass upon my face,
Giving me back the dear familiar grace
O'er which my mother poured her last fond prayer.
But sin and age will rob me of this power,
Though now my heart, like an uneasy lake,
Some broken images at times may take
From forms which fade more sadly every hour !

XLIV.

Verſes ſent to a Friend,

WITH A COPY OF "FROUDE'S REMAINS."

I.

THE languid heart, that hath been ever nurſt
By strains of drowsy ſweetneſs, ill can brook
The rude rough music that at times doth burſt
From him whose thoughts are treaſured in this
book.

It was his lot to live in days uncouth
That shrink from aught ſo hard and ſtern as truth.

II.

I know my generous friend too well to fear
This holy gift will be unsafe with thee ;
Thou never yet haſt had the heart to sneer
At the eccentric feats of chivalry,
And well I know there are cold men who deem
This ſaintly cauſe a weak knight-errant's dream.

III.

When thou hast marked him well, thine eye will
trace
Lines deep and stedfast, features grave and
bold,
Beauty austere and masculine, a face
And stalwart form wrought in an antique
mould ;
And if some shades too broad and coarse be
thrown,
'Tis where the age hath marred the block of
stone !

XLV.

Written in a little Lady's little Album.

I.

Hearts good and true
 Have wishes few
 In narrow circles bounded,
 And hope that lives
 On what God gives
 Is Christian hope well founded.

II.

Small things are best:
 Grief and unrest
 To rank and wealth are given ;
 But little things
 On little wings
 Bear little souls to Heaven.

XLVI.

The Mediterranean Sea.

Oh, thou old heartless Sea, without a tide
 To bless thee with its changing ! Ah, poor Sea !
 How idly beat thy waves, how languidly
 On Baiæ's piers, or Adria's level side !
 Eternal sunset round old Greece doth play :
 All faint and wan Rome's last imperial smile
 Yet lingers in each Hellespontine bay.
 Still at his mouths the melancholy Nile
 Talks to himself of Egypt's kingly day.
 A belt of goodly towns have ruins hoar,
 Silent as tombs, on Libya's blighted shore ;
 And Venice woos her blue canals no more :
 Yet for all this no heart is in thy waves,
 Thou heavy Sea of shadows and of graves !

XLVII.

Heaven and Earth.

THERE are no shadows where there is no sun ;
 There is no beauty where there is no shade ;
 And all things in two lines of glory run,
 Darkness and light, ebon and gold inlaid.
 God comes among us through the shrouds of air ;
 And His dim track is like the silvery wake
 Left by yon pinnace on the mountain lake,
 Fading and reappearing here and there.
 The lamps and veils through Heaven and Earth
 that move
 Go in and out, as jealous of their light,
 Like sailing stars upon a misty night.
 Death is the shade of coming life ; and Love
 Yearns for her dear ones in the holy tomb,
 Because bright things are better seen in gloom.

XLVIII.

To G. S. S.

Sept. 8, 1838, A.S.

I.

My heart was like a wooded vale,
Bright with a summer afternoon,
With shades so thick the sun was pale
And thin as an autumnal moon ;
And winds made stirs in every tree,
Most like a far-off, quiet sea.

II.

There came a cloud o'er this bright home,
Sudden and strange ; and no one knew
From whence the omen dark had come
When all the sky around was blue.
The wind dropped down ; and sounds came near,
Like thunder when the air is clear.

III.

Still hangs that gloomy cloud above,
Hiding the glorious sun, whose power
Once shed romantic lights of love
On moorland stream and forest bower,
When all things wore a charm to me,
Oh how unlike reality !

IV.

In pale and tarnished green, the trees
Stand by yon brook in silent row ;
Rills that made songs to every breeze
Have lost the music of their flow :
And wildflowers mourn the summer air
That comes not now to wanton there.

V.

Ah, dearest !—wouldst thou know how much
My aching heart in thee doth live ?
One look of thy blue eye—one touch
Of thy dear hand last night could give
Fresh hopes to shine amid my fears,
And thoughts that shed themselves in tears.

XLIX.

A Conversation near Rydal.

Sept. 8, 1838.

I COULD have wished the few last precious hours
 I had with thee, dear friend, should have been
 given
 To dreams of love, and thoughts and hopes of
 Heaven.

Autumn is out among these woodland bowers :
 Still am I lingering here, as loth to part
 From my soul's glorious king. Yet ah ! my heart
 Hath been at wayward angry war with thine.
 I spoke rude words of those who are at rest,
 Profaning him whose memory thou dost shrine
 In some choice niche within thy secret breast.
 But, if thou dost forgive thy friend this wrong,
 Though haply it be unforgotten, yet
 I will not mourn : for grief so keen and strong
 Tell how thy throne within my heart is set !

L.

Green Bank.

Sept. 12, 1838.

I.

BROTHER, brother ! thou art gone, and I will not
mourn thy going,

Though thou hast been unto me like a river in its
flowing ;

For many a fresh and manly thought, and many a
glorious dream,

Like fruits and flowers of foreign lands, have
flourished by the stream.

Yet, brother, it is well to part : a sunset in the
sky

Sinks deepest in the heart when it is fading from
the eye !

II.

The heart is never safe unless it trembles while it
woos;

Man cannot love a treasure that he does not fear
to lose.

In touch and look and earnest tone, and many a
little way

Thy spirit will be more with me when thou art
far away:

For men may dwell by mountain streams, and all
the summer round

Have music lingering in their ears till they forget
the sound.

III.

Though it be bitterness and pain to bid a friend
good-bye,

Yet love will catch the tear-drops as they hurry
from the eye:

And friendship's rarest, holiest flowers spring up
from loyal fears,

Frail blooms that give no scent unless we water
them with tears:

And rich and happy is the heart wherein there
always dwell,
Like household gods, the memories of many a kind
farewell !

LI.

**The Emblems of Archbishop Laud's Week
of Prayers¹.**

SUNDAY.

It is my guardian Angel that doth rise,
. His face turned from the world, for he is bent
To seek my risen Master in the skies,
Borne on the breath of prayer and Sacrament.

MONDAY.

Yet hath he left me for my Monday thought
This sadly faithful image of my Lord,
That when the weekdays toil and trouble brought,
I might take this dread sign with me abroad.

TUESDAY.

He will not leave me by myself too long,
Though fain is he in his bright home to stay ;
And he hath clasped his hand in mine so strong,
Perchance God means I shall not fall to-day.

¹ From the wood-cuts of the Oxford edition, 1838.

WEDNESDAY.

This morn he left me, and he laid a Cross
 Flat on the ground, to frighten me from sin ;
 Lest mean ambition, lust, or worldly dross,
 My traitor thoughts from my dear Lord should
 win.

THURSDAY.

To-day he hath ascended up on high,
 Early, before I woke ; that I might yearn
 And gaze all wistfully into the sky,
 And a cold look on this blank world might turn.

FRIDAY.

All Friday long he kneels behind a shroud
 To pray, perchance, with many a tear for me ;
 But at the compline he doth burst the cloud,
 Bright as the evening of a fast may be.

SATURDAY.

The week is gone : and wherefore dost thou keep
 So long a vigil ? Is it all for me ?
 Oh ! if my sins can make an angel weep,
 My Saviour ! let me hide myself in Thee.

LII.

WHEN men talk much to me of woods and hills,
How evening lights and star-embroidered skies
Go through them with mysterious sympathies,
How gushing cataracts and diving rills
Find way into their hearts, and Autumn pale
And Spring ere sunny June hath raised her veil
And Summer's breadth of shade, are full of
thought—

Then I believe them not : they have but caught
A trick of words from some dear minstrel's verse.
The awful spirit of reserve, that dwells
In nature's forms and shadows, hides in cells,
The jealous hearts of bards, her treasures rare.
Men that have been with God learn silence there,
Nor at all times their secret joys rehearse.

LIII.

Absence from Oxford.

CITY of God, my best and truest home !
 When from thy holy places I depart
 By far-off hills and river banks to roam,
 I bear thy name about upon my heart.
 City of glorious towers ! whene'er I feel
 The world's rude coldness o'er my spirit steal,
 Then dost thou rise to view ; thine elmy groves
 Vocal with hymns of praise, thine old grey halls,
 Where the wan sun of autumn sweetest falls,
 Yon hill-side wood the nightingale so loves,
 Thy rivers twain, of gentle foot, that pass,
 Fed from a hundred willow-girdled wells,
 Through the rich meadowlands of long green
 grass,
 To the loud tunes of all thy convent-bells !

LIV.

Absence from Oxford.

THUS have I carried thee all England through,
A resting-place for my world-wearied eye,
The sunset spot in this dull evening sky,
The streak of gold that bounds the twilight view !
And I have felt far off the incense rise,
The fragrance of thy daily sacrifice,
Like scents from Eden freighted with a charm
For tearful eyes and foreheads worn and pale.
As he who dwells upon some moorland farm,
Far in the windings of a mountain-vale,
Feels that he is not lonely, when at even
He journeys homeward from his toil, and sees
The distant village from among the trees,
Breathing its faint blue curls of smoke to Heaven.

LV. .

To a bookish Friend.

TALK not of books ; thou hast not been with me,
Free and bareheaded, where the wind is wildest,
Lifting its loud voice on the tumbling sea,
Or riding fast o'er Loughrigg's many knolls :
No, nor where ebon night's dread power is mildest,
In Kirkstone, when the wandering nightwind tolls
Hoarse minute-bells among the rocky towers :
Nor lurked at noon in Brathay's hazel bowers.
Thou hast not seen the dawn's first blushing beams
Gild the grey battlements of Ravenscar,
The hills, the pines, the hundred foamy streams ;
Nor talked all night to some most heavenly star,
Where solitude hath got her holiest dwelling,
By the black tarn where Fairfield meets Helvellyn !

LVI.

King's Bridge.

I.

THE dew falls fast, and the night is dark,
And the trees stand silent in the park ;
And winter passeth from bough to bough
With stealthy foot that none may know,
But little the old man thinks he weaves
His frosty kiss on the ivy leaves.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
The river droppeth down,
And it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
On the skirts of Cambridge town.

Old trees by night are like men in thought,
By poetry to silence wrought ;
They stand so still and they look so wise,
With folded arms and halfshut eyes,

More shadowy than the shade they cast
When the wan moonlight on the river past.
The river is green, and runneth slow—
We cannot tell what it saith ;
It keepeth its secrets down below,
And so doth Death !

II.

Oh ! the night is dark ; but not so dark
As my poor soul in this lonely park :
There are festal lights by the stream, that fall,
Like stars, from the casements of yonder hall ;
But harshly the sounds of joyaunce grate
On one that is crushed and desolate.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
The river droppeth down,
As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
On the skirts of Cambridge town.

Oh, Mary ! Mary ! "could I but hear
What this river saith in night's still ear,
And catch the faint whispering voice it brings
From its lowlands green and its reedy springs ;

It might tell of the spot where the greybeard's
spade

Turned the cold wet earth in the lime-tree shade.

The river is green, and runneth slow—

We cannot tell what it saith :

It keepeth its secrets down below,

And so doth Death !

III.

For death was born in thy blood with life—

Too holy a fount for such sad strife :

Like a secret curse from hour to hour

The canker grew with the growing flower,

And little we deemed that rosy streak

Was the tyrant's seal on thy virgin cheek.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall

The river droppeth down,

As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall

On the skirts of Cambridge town.

But fainter and fainter thy bright eyes grew,

And ruder and redder that rosy hue ;

And the half-shed tears that never fell,
And the pain within thou wouldest not tell,
And the wild, wan smile,—all spoke of death,
That had withered my chosen with his breath.

The river is green, and runneth slow—

We cannot tell what it saith :

It keepeth its secrets down below,

And so doth Death !

IV.

'Twas o'er thy harp one day in June,
I marvelled the strings were out of tune ;
But lighter and quicker the music grew,
And deadly white was thy rosy hue ;
One moment—and back the colour came,
Thou calledst me by my Christian name.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall

The river droppeth down,

As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall

On the skirts of Cambridge town.

Thou badest me be silent and bold,

But my brain was hot, and my heart was cold.

I never wept, and I never spake,
But stood like a rock where the salt seas break ;
And to this day I have shed no tear
O'er my blighted love and my chosen's bier.

The river is green, and runneth slow—
We cannot tell what it saith :
It keepeth its secrets down below,
And so doth Death !

v.

I stood in the church with burning brow,
The lips of the priest moved solemn and slow.
I noted each pause, and counted each swell,
As a sentry numbers a minute-bell ;
For unto the mourner's heart they call
From the deeps of that wondrous ritual.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
The river droppeth down,
As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
On the skirts of Cambridge town.

My spirit was lost in a mystic scene,
Where the sun and moon in silvery sheen

Were belted with stars on emerald wings,
And fishes and beasts and all fleshly things,
And the spheres did whirl with laughter and mirth
Round the grave forefather of the earth.

The river is green, and runneth slow—

We cannot tell what it saith :

It keepeth its secrets down below,

And so doth Death !

VI.

The dew falls fast, and the night is dark ;
The trees stand silent in the park.
The festal lights have all died out,
And nought is heard but a lone owl's shout.
The mists keep gathering more and more ;
But the stream is silent as before.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall

The river droppeth down,

As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall

On the skirts of Cambridge town.

Why should I think of my boyhood's bride

As I walk by this low-voiced river's side ?

And why should its heartless waters seem
Like a horrid thought in a feverish dream ?
But it will not speak ; and it keeps in its bed
The words that are sent us from the dead.

The river is green, and runneth slow—
We cannot tell what it saith :
It keepeth its secrets down below,
And so doth Death !

LVII.

To J. M.

THOU walkest with a glory round thy brow,
 Like Saints in pictures,—radiant in the blaze
 And splendour of thy boyhood, mingling now
 With the bold bearing of a man, that plays
 In eyes which do with such sweet skill express
 Thy soul's hereditary gentleness.

Thou art my friend's best friend ; and higher praise
 My heart hath none to give, nor thine to take ;
 So I have loved thee for my brother's sake.
 But when thou talk'st of England's better days,
 And from its secret place thy soul comes forth,
 And sits upon thy lips as on a throne,
 Then would I fain do homage to thy worth,
 And worship thee for England's sake, and for
 thine own.

LVIII.

To T. H. C.

“Pignus accepimus, ut incipiamus in Domino et in Deo nostro tranquilli esse.”—*St. Augustin.*

We have two things to do, to live and die :
 To win another and a longer life
 Out of this earthy change and weary strife ;
 To catch the hours that one by one go by,
 And write the Cross upon them as they fly.
 So shall they lay their burden gently down,
 Sinking, perchance hard-by, beneath the Throne,
 Withdrawn anew into eternity.
 'Tis hard to live by youth's fast bubbling springs,
 And treat our loves, joys, hopes, as flowery things
 That for awhile may climb the boughs, and twine
 Among the prickly leaves of discipline.
 Yet wouldest thou rise in Christ's selfmastering
 school
 Thy very heart itself must beat by rule.

LIX.

Favourite Books.

HERE, in thy choice old city, do I dwell
At thy dread feet, most honoured Clarendon !
Catching the precious words, that one by one
Fall from thy lips ; because I love full well
Thy good and stately sadness : and I prize,
As warnings for this land, the auguries
Wherewith, like fatal seeds, thy pages swell.
From these hot thoughts and tears too oft I fly
To the gay Froissart, and those wondrous men
Who dreamed of honour and had heart to die
For their own brave and glorious dream ; and then,
Albeit with boyish lingerings, again
I turn to graver books, where by my side
Lies Origen, my dear and perilous guide.

LX.

To a sanguine Friend.

I CANNOT live on dreams my whole life long,
I cannot gaze on ruined arch and aisle
And altar desolate,—and then beguile
My weary soul with some old loyal song
Or tale of English honour. 'Tis not years
Have chilled my blood or made my spirit cold,
But ancient books, kindling new hopes and fears,
The awful features of the Church unfold.
Yet, when in this dear land sad hearts behold
That Church alone at her deserted prayers
Amid her empty niches, unawares
Old truths revive and coward men grow bold;
And shall my heart give way, while thou art by,
Thine own meek self our surest prophecy?

LXI.

April Mornings.

TO J. M.

I.

A THOUSAND are the minstrel tongues
In this unequal clime,
Whose sweetest notes have been of spring
And of her primrose time.

II.

More songs hath April of her gifts,—
Bright sun and rainy breeze,
Then May with her pale flower-beds,
And June with her broad trees.

III.

I dare not join the mighty souls
Upon the poet's hill,
Though, looking long on those green heights,
My dream may come true still.

IV.

Yet will I hymn this season good
Which doth such joy impart,
And gives back boyhood to the blood,
And lightness to the heart.

V.

It takes the fetters from the lyre
On April's first white dawn,
When the sun is on the evergreens
Upon the college lawn.

VI.

It doth unlock young fancy's wells
To run all summer long,
Till the whole heart is overflowed
With unimprisoned song.

VII.

Those wells are chartered for the year
To wind o'er field and hill,
Early and late, in sun and shower,
Speaking in songs at will.

VIII.

All things are metrical and free
That taste of spring's wild treasure ;
Our very thoughts, in their first joy,
Come out in lyric measure.

IX.

Yet, Manners, most I love this time,—
For Spring, as she goes by,
Will trim the fires of the old year
In thy dark speaking eye.

X.

Last summer's harp from yon oak-tree,
Young Poet ! thou shalt bring,
And we will play a measure here
In honour of the Spring !

LXII.

To G. S. S.

Oh by the love which unto thee I bear,
 By the tall trees and streams and everything
 In the white-clouded sky or woodland air,
 Whether of sight or sound, that here may bring
 The joyous freshness of the grassy spring—
 Fain would I warn thee ; for too well I know,
 Be what thou wilt, thou must be dear to me.
 And lo ! thou art in utter bondage now,
 Whence I would have thy manly spirit free.
 Among the hills we two did never mar
 The moss about the springs, but learnt to spare
 Pale flowers which rude hands would not leave to
 grow ;
 And dearest ! if thou wert so gentle there—
 Thy soul hath better flowers—oh ! be as guiltless
 now.

LXIII.

Birthday Thoughts.

At the Grave of BISHOP KEN, Frome, Somerset, 1839.

IF in the years of my most wandering youth
Some few unintended plants have learned to flower,
Thine was the mercy, Lord ! and thine the power
That sowed and kept alive the seeds of Truth.
Father and earthly mother I have none,
Sweet bride nor marriage-home, nor children here,
Nor looks of love—but Thine, my Saviour dear !
And my young heart bears ill to live alone.
So to the wild and weedy grave I come
Of this meek man of heart, who bore the Cross,
Hid in a lordly crosier, to his home,
And for Thy love did count all else but loss.
Long as my life may be, teach me like him
To follow Thee by pathways lone and dim.

Better they should be lonely—better far
The world should be all dark ; so through the night
And with fresh tears to multiply the light,
Mine eyes might see Thy pale and single star.
Yet, Lord ! 'tis hard when evening shadows come,
To have no sight or sound of earthly cheer :
Still were my faith but strong, Thou wouldest be
near,
And I in my pure thoughts might find a home :
And memory might hear her dead loves breathe,
Soft as the songs of some shy hidden bird
From the low fields or woodlands nightly heard.
That evening spell which Ken did once bequeath.—
O shame on me to fear the Cross should press
Too hard in chaste and thoughtful loneliness !

LXIV.

Llynsgwadon.

By summer lakes and copsewoods green
We two in happy times have been ;
And blyther pilgrims never rode,
Since Leven down her valley flowed,
Or mass was sung and prayer was said
In Furness o'er the Christian dead.
That was a day of love and mirth
Which may not dawn again on earth.
Each plant that in the hedges grew,
Fox-glove and fern and bell of blue,
And bending rose-branch—all were bright
With more than summer's common light.
We thought that day by Leven's brink
Sad thoughts, which youth delights to think

That in its musings it may feel
How well and gently love can steal
On drooping hearts and troubled eyes
And take our sadness by surprise.

Another year is well-nigh told :
My heart and spirits have waxed old,
From growing thought, fresh sins and fears,
More than in all my other years !

Sweet are the oaks in summer-tide
By Llynsyvaddon's reedy side,
Or the cool alders arching o'er
Where Usk indents his earthy shore.
There hath not been a brighter dawn
On old Llanthony's mountain lawn
Or Honddy's wave—not since the hour
When Mynarch feasted in Tretower.

By rock and tree the tyrant sun
Reigned fiercely o'er the cloudless noon ;
And I had dreamed yon mistwreath still
Was resting on some Cumbrian hill,
And fancy for awhile had given
To Usk the sweeter song of Leven.

Alas ! how changed is all the scene,
Mountains and streams and dingles green !
The ivied tower in every vale,
Some haunt of legendary tale,
The flowery slope, the mossy spring
No tuneful words or thoughts can bring.
They pass through spirits ill at ease,
Like summer winds through leafless trees.
For then it was thy heart and eye
That touched and stirred the poetry.
But now, among the hills alone,
The color from my dream is gone ;
And lonely hearts will often move
Harsh doubts of those they fondest love.
Sadness is selfish ; and the throng
Of thoughts in loneliness too strong
To make or leave a home for song !

Llanthony lurks in Ewia's vale,
And Wye half-clasps her Tintern pale,
And Usk is flowing every hour
By Ragland, Brecon, and Tretower.

Yet could I see the summer smile
Just now in Furness' haunted pile,
The broken choir, the hollow grove,
Which we did people with our love,—
Wye with her woodland tides might be
A place, a name, forgot by me,
And Usk rave downward to the sea.
Yes—by my love for thee I swear
Those mountains green and valleys fair,
With all their castles, are not worth
One ruined abbey in the North.

LXV.

Childhood.

TO MY ONLY SISTER.

I.

Dost thou remember how we lived at home—
That it was like an oriental place,
Where right and wrong, and praise and blame did
come
By ways we wondered at and durst not trace,
And gloom and sadness were but shadows thrown
From griefs that were our sire's, and not our own ?

II.

It was a moat about our souls, an arm
Of sea, that made the world a foreign shore,
And we were too enamoured of the charm
To dream that barks might come and waft us o'er.
Cold snow was on the hills ; and they did wear
Too wild and wan a look to tempt us there.

III.

We had traditions of our own, to weave
A web of creed and rite and sacred thought ;
And when a stranger, who did not believe
As they who were our types of God had taught,
Came to our home, how harsh his words did seem,
Like sounds that mar but cannot break a dream.

IV.

And then in Scripture some high things there were,
Of which, they said, we must not read or talk ;
And we through fear did never trespass there,
But made our Bibles like our twilight walk
In the deep woodlands, where we durst not roam
To spots from whence we could not see our home.

V.

Albeit we fondly hoped, when we were men,
To learn the lore our parents loved so well,
And read the rites and symbols which were then
But letters of a word we could not spell—
Church-bells, and Sundays when we did not play,
And Sacraments at which we might not stay.

VI.

But we too soon from our safe place were driven;
The world broke in upon our orphaned life.
Dawnings of good, young flowers that looked to
Heaven,
It left untilled for what seemed manlier strife;
Like a too-early summer, bringing fruit
Where spring perchance had meant another shoot!

VII.

Some begin life too soon,—like sailors thrown
Upon a shore where common things look strange;
Like them they roam about a foreign town,
And grief awhile may own the force of change.
Yet, though one hour new dress and tongue may
please,
Our second thoughts look homeward, ill at ease.

VIII.

Come then unto our childhood's wreck again—
The rocks hard-by our father's early grave;
And take the few chance treasures that remain,
And live through manhood upon what we save.

So shall we roam the same old shore at will !
In the fond faith that we are children still.

IX.

Christian ! thy dream is now—it was not then :
 Oh ! it were strange if childhood were a dream.
Strife and the world are dreams : to wakeful men
 Childhood and home as jealous Angels seem :
Like shapes and hues that play in clouds at even,
They have but shifted from thee into Heaven !

LXVI.

Ross Churchyard.

IT is an evening of profound repose :
The sun's last light is passing up the Wye ;
The hills and woods, the quiet earth and sky
More than is wont that inner world disclose
Which they so barely cover. All is still—
So still, so little likely to surprise
The world's wayfaring sons, that it might fill
A Christian heart with strange and dim surmise.
The end perchance may come with like still power,
The world's last evening, man's last trial-hour,
When the glad Church, to whom alone is given
To read earth's types and rites with faultless art,
May see the shadows from the inner heaven
Stirring on its pale earthly counterpart.

LXVII.

The Feast of the Invention of the
Holy Cross¹.

[May 3.]

“ We heard of the same at Ephrata, and found it in the wood.”—*Ps. cxxxii. 6.*

I.

We came to bid farewell : it was the day
Whereon the white earth-fretted Cross was
found ;
And we, strange chance ! did meet it on our way,
As we were in an ancient pleasure-ground
Close by a languid river, where the spring
'Mid bursting buds and flowers was rioting.

¹ It may be as well to say that the author thinks the historical evidence for the legend quite insufficient.

II.

It was a garden wild, a mystic scene,
 Which an old poet in times past had planned,
 And May was coloring with lines of green
 The goodly work of his religious hand.
 For he had thought a broad Church-cross to make,
 And bade the elms the hallowed form to take¹.

III.

Transept and nave each summer roofs with care ;
 And here perchance in life's less happy hours
 The dwellers in that holy House repair
 To learn deep Christian things from homely
 flowers,
 When evening comes with many winds to chime
 Up in the trees her own cathedral time.

IV.

Outside the Cross a wilderness was laid,
 Apt likeness of the world—had it not been
 That moss and colonies of primrose made
 Too sweet a desert, far too fair a scene !
 There many a proud young fritillary weaves
 With hyacinths his panther-spotted leaves :

¹ The gardens of St. John's, Cambridge, laid out by Prior.

v.

And lily-plants in scattered pairs, like gems,
 Shine in the tall dark grass between the trees,
 Stooping to empty on their own green stems
 The morning dew from their red chalices ;
 For at high-noon the drops lay sparkling still
 On king-cup pale and jealous daffodil.

vi.

We came to bid farewell : beneath the shade
 Old times, old dreams were sweetly pondered
 o'er,
 And sweeter was the welcome that we made
 To wiser hopes,—and I did love thee more
 For all the signs thou wert so meekly giving
 Of the grave inward life which thou art living !

vii.

We came and bade farewell ; and thou didst go
 To lands where trees have larger leaves than
 ours ;
 But the fair fields where foreign rivers flow,
 Their piny hills, will give thee no such powers
 As the low hazel-woods and forest brakes
 That open to our own unworldly lakes.

VIII.

Unworldly lakes!—Did we not dream away
Part of our manhood by their inland coves,
Living, like summer insects, all the day
In summer winds or shade of drowsy groves?
And with our endless songs and joyous airs
Made wings unto ourselves as bright as theirs?

IX.

Farewell!—These lines may go where thou hast
gone,
Dearest to me of all my youthful rhymes:
Our past leave-takings are the food whereon
All friendship lives; and at her lonely times
Shall memory poetic impulse borrow
From the green place and hour of that sweet
sorrow.

LXVIII.

Ambitious Repentance.

I.

PEACE! Peace! What aileth thee, poor sinful heart?

Rest in thy lonely room—

Scant happiness and sinner's penance gloom

Henceforth must be thy part.

II.

Why cravest thou, poor soul! fresh want or pain,

Mishap or sickness strong?

He must be old in faith who dares to long

For punishment again.

III.

The Cross, the Thorns, the Woes, that press thee

now,

Have yet got fruit to bear;

And there is virtue still in each keen care

To scathe thy lofty brow.

IV.

Absence of earthly joys, no prospects brave
By some chance joy exposed,
And vents of sweetest mortal feeling closed
With cold earth from the grave:—

V.

These are thy riches, where thy lone abode
Mid withered loves is cast,
And ghosts of broken day-dreams, and the past
Accusing thee to God.

VI.

All things that touch thee wither—let them be!
For thou dost wither all.
Stern cheer! mid blight and barrenness *they* call,
The Dead call out to thee.

VII.

The early sins, which compass thee about,
To aid thy frailty come,
And clear for penitence a hidden home
And keep the world's praise out.

VIII.

All round thee, like kind wreaths of cloud, they rise,
To hide the heart's fresh bloom,
That thou may'st still be troubled in thy gloom
By men's hard tongues and eyes.

IX.

Covet no more ; nor in ambitious hours
Thy little strength forget :
Ah ! there is store of bitter honey yet
Deep in these scentless flowers.

X.

One joy is undenied : one earthly love
Kept from the barren past :
One golden sunbeam that o'er feast and fast
With equal mirth doth move.

XI.

Thou canst not bear to lose it, ever twining
Bright thoughts among thy dark ;
Twould be thy death, poor soul ! no more to mark
Its solitary shining.

xii.

Covet no more : from these few pangs thou must
Enough for penance earn ;
And wait and work : faith's last hard lesson learn,
Calmness in self-distrust.

xiii.

Autumnal thoughts : the greenest honours shed,
With dreams and loves decayed,
At every wind's first bidding, straight obeyed,—
These strew thy hermit bed.

xiv.

Wan as an autumn sun thy whole youth through
On feeblest shinings live ;
And later on new frosts perchance may give
Autumnal beauty too.

LXIX.

To a Lake Party.

I.

We shall all meet again,
Not in the wood or plain,
Nor by the lake's green marge.
But we shall meet once more
By a far greener shore,
With our souls set at large.

II.

We all shall never stand
On Rothay's white-lipped strand,
And hear the far sheep-cries :
The Wansfell wind may blow,
But not to kindle now
The bright fire in our eyes.

III.

The three cleft mountains stand
In their own treeless land,
Where we all stood and wondered.
The black cliffs are the same
Where the hundred echoes came
That dark day when it thundered.

IV.

The summer sun sinks nightly
Into the Solway brightly—
We are not there to see.
The mountain loophole seems
Full of the golden beams,
Full as it used to be.

V.

Athwart the sunlit vale
The heavy ravens sail,
Each to his craggy dwelling ;
While evening gathers brown
On thy stone-sprinkled down,
Thou desolate Helvellyn !

VI.

Still, still, in twilight shade
Mountains make me afraid,
And the wood-sounds at night ;
The red moon in the pine,
And lustrous tarns that shine,
With gray and ghostly light.

VII.

But vain to me the show ;
My heart is weary now
Of all its holy places.
Oh ! what are sun and shower,
Hill-path and forest-bower,
Where there are no friend's faces ?

VIII.

My youth is left behind
For some one else to find,
Upon a bare green mountain :
My self-tuned harp is thrown,
Where a juniper clasps a stone,
Near a moss-belted fountain.

IX.

We shall all meet again,
Not in the wood or plain,
Nor by the lake's green marge.
The past shall be lived o'er
By a far greener shore,
With our souls set at large.

LXX.

The Mourner's Dream:

ARISING FROM A STRANGE AND DISTRESSING IMPRESSION OF
A FRIEND'S DEATH IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

“Wir müssen nach der Heimath gehn,
Um diese heil'ge Zeit zu sehn.”

NOVALIS.



TO THE

LORD JOHN MANNERS,

WHOSE FRIENDSHIP

HAS BEEN THE SOURCE

OF ALL THAT IS HAPPY AND GENTLE IN IT,

This Poem

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY HIS LOYAL AND LOVING FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



The Mourner's Dream.

By a steep winding vale I left
A terrace in a mountain-cleft.
Old pines with ruddy boles were there,
Half-gilded by the sunny air.
The holm oaks, palms, and service-trees
Hung motionless without a breeze.
No vernal gale or summer stir
Bent the green cones upon the fir.
No water, tinkling as it fell,
Taught the young birds their earliest sound,
Or in its murmuring way unbound
The sylvan languor of the dell.
All through the shaggy gorge were seen
Tree-tops and folds of various green ;

And noon with pleasant silence there
Loaded the misty drooping air,
And, birdlike, seemed herself to brood
On a vast couch of glorious wood.
Where many-fingered cedars shed
 All down the slope dark flakes of shade,
 And grateful dusky sunlight made,
I chose a moss and wild-flower bed.
Ever before my half-closed eyes
The sundered mountain-peaks did rise ;
And though I knew each field and rill
That lay beyond that mighty hill,
Yet still the wondrous cleft did seem
A pass whereby a mourner's dream
 To other worlds might travel,
And somewhat of his brother's state,
In dreadest twilight separate,
 Might sleep perchance unravel.

I.

The Ruined Harbour.

I STOOD, methought, in some lone place,—
A fallen city, at whose base
That summer noon the shining sea
Made all soft sounds perpetually ;
And, as it swelled, its liquid fall
Scarce lifted the weeds on the harbour-wall :
And the little waves, all one by one,
Far out in furrows green did run,
And then lay down and sparkled in the sun !
There was no shade, no leafy tree,
Yet waited I by that fair sea ;
And watched the ocean-water fill
With its clear self, and at its will,

The broken harbour's ample round,
Without a wave and without a sound !
So men have watched their friends for hours,
 Filling with silent love,
While dreams fall on them both in showers,
 Like starlights from above ;
Till the bright waters, as they rise,
Mount and run over at the eyes.
Oh ! who that in youth's morning light
 With sails full-set and songs did ride
Into love's harbour with the tide,
Hath dreamed that it would ebb at night ?
Through the long hours of noon I stood
Alone in that sunny solitude.
Not a voice was in the weed-grown way,
 Not a ship was on the wave,
The sea was by itself all day,
 And the streets were like a grave,
All things were still as they could be,
The sand, the city, and the sea !
I lingered there—for on my breast
A weight of weary sorrow pressed ;

My soul, like a mourner, low did bend
Over the memory of my dead friend.
Yet there is somewhat in the tear
 Of deep affection's willing sadness
To the lone heart more kind and dear
 Than the strong smile of health and glad-
 ness ;
And it is better, for our love's sake, they
We love the best should soonest go away.
I thought of him, as though he were by,
With his dark bright hair, and his darker
 eye,
And his face alive with chivalry ;
Of his broad white brow with a slender vein,
And his words like drops of summer rain,
Soft as the voice of a timid maiden,
Ever with his own brave language laden.
I have twined my hands in that dark bright
 hair
 For many a dreaming hour,
And in sport have held down his eyelids fair
 To keep me from their power,

And have hung on his words, so sweet and rare,
Like a knight in his lady's bower.
The eloquent smile that ever hung
O'er his mouth, like a sunny wreath,
Grew lovelier on his lips, and clung
Ten times more glorious after death.
There is a spell on his silent tongue,
As when a poet dies
And the spirits bind his lyre unstrung
To the bier whereon he lies.
I saw thy beautiful limbs all bare,
And thy new-made grave looked cold,
And I grudged it sadly to the mould
To lie so long on thy glossy hair !
Dearest ! thy spirit was set on fire
At the fount of ancient days,
And therefore wert thou lifted higher,
To where that fountain plays.
Sacred and pure, the awful flame
About thy youth and health did roll,
Till thy fair vest of earth became
A sacrifice unto thy soul.

Like an eagle, up in the heavens bare,
Wild with the draughts of his mountain air,
The heights of lone thought beheld thee die
In the fire of thine own free poetry !

II.

The Voyage.

I WAITED then by that fair sea,
Till the power of evening came on me.
I saw the sunset colours fall
Paler and fainter on the wall,
And watched the broken shadows grow
Dark and long on the sand below ;
And the sea was gone far down the shore
With the same soft sounds for evermore.
Still on the quivering level lay
The last dull crimson lights of day,
When to my feet a bright green boat
Softly and gaily seemed to float,
With neither helm, nor sail, nor oar,
Over the shallows on the shore.

Green it was as the living tide
Whereon its little prow should ride,
And lighter than the foam-wreaths frail
That o'er the windy ocean sail.
Within, a silver Anchor stood,
And a Crucifix of scented wood
Upon the seat was laid ;
And round it some large foreign flowers
With fresh leaves from the ivy bowers
Into a Crown were made.
Swifter and swifter did I float
Eastward in the bright green boat ;
And, as the coast grew dim and white,
I sank in awe upon my knee,
And trusted myself for the dark night
To the holy Cross and to the sea.
No breath upon the deep did move,
The moon was not in her place above.
With steadiest motion all along
The boat on her path did steal,
Without a sound, but the murmuring song
Of the water round the keel :

And through the gloom, without a bound,
The purple ocean lay around.
The snowy sea-birds as they flew
 Across the deep midnight,
From off their lustrous plumage threw
 Flashes of sudden light.

Yet did I not feel lonely there,
For ever a scent, like incense rare,
Stole from the Cross on the warm night air ;
And the dew that clung upon the flowers
Sweet memories of earth's pale bowers
 Back to my heart did bring :
Like the cold and sunny winds that yield
The fragrance out of the meadow field
 In the first fresh days of spring.
And thus was that little boat to me
A quiet Church on the holy sea !

But seven white planets, one by one,
Rose from the sea as the boat drove on ;
And up in the sky the starry bow
Pierced with its rays the billows below,

And the tall thin shafts of palest gold
Wavered and bent as the waters rolled,—
Bent, but they broke not ; and the light
Was fairer far than a summer night,
When the moon, unthrifty of her brightness,
Paveth the sea with a trembling whiteness.
Still onward did the shallop sail,
Till the sea was green and the stars grew pale ;
And the sun as from the waves he went
Unlocked the pearly orient.
But eastward yet the bark did steal,
So swift the wave scarce wet the keel ;
While in the dawn the cold fresh sea
Shone bright and murmured merrily.

Our life lies eastward : every day
Some little of that mystic way
By trembling feet is trod :
In thoughtful fast and quiet feast
Our thoughts go travelling to the East
To our Incarnate God.

Fresh from the Font our childhood's prime
To life's most oriental time,

Its joyous sights and mighty fears,
And feelings deep that work by tears,
Its dreams and smiles age cannot share,
Are borrowed from that region fair.
The beamy land, where morning lives
And Eden still is blooming, gives
Strange rays for childish hearts to hoard,
Bright flashes from the seraph-sword

That waves in Eden's light :

And still, when childhood's race is run
And God from Egypt calls His son,
Through worldliest haze and rudest gleams,
The East comes back to us in dreams,
In holy dreams by night.

'Tis then o'er marvellous maps we pore,
Bare outlines of the Eastern shore,
And idly strive to fix the spot
Where Eden lies, with cave, and grot,
And lawn, and river-sounds, away
In the heart of middle Asia.
'Tis then love singles out the trees
With foreign-looking leaves,

And oft in summer's languid breeze

Poor fancy sits and weaves

Of each exotic shrub and flower

A shadow of an Eden bower.

When childhood's painted flag is furled,

And long chill shadows from the world

Are o'er our pathway thrown,

Still, while its early dreams escape,

The longing spirit fain would shape

An orient of its own.

Still doth it Eastward turn in prayer,

And rear its saving Altar there.

Still doth it Eastward turn in Creed,

While faith in awe each gracious deed

Of her dear Saviour's love doth plead,

Still doth it turn at every line

To the far East—in sweet mute sign

That through our weary strife and pain

We crave our Eden back again.

We came unto a river's mouth,

Which hath its secret fountains

Away in the unpeopled south,
Among unpeopled mountains.
A sultry haze upon the sea,
And long low shore lay heavily.
A bar of rocks stretched east and west
The frothy shallows under,
On which the chafing billows pressed
And broke in muffled thunder.
And further up the misty land
The waves foamed idly on the sand.
And on the sandbanks in the bay
Sea-dogs and seals together lay ;
As though the hot mist of noon were sweet
After the deep's cold gloom.
They slept like the dogs at the marble feet
Of a Templar on his tomb.
All was still as a place of the dead,
Not a mountain lifted his far-off head,
Not an outline blue was seen.
Grass was not there, nor shady trees,
Not a branch or blade of green,

But a row of seaside villages

With low sand-hills between.

The bar is bare where the white waves sound,

And tide and stream are quivering round,

But the bark hath crossed, for the river bound.

It lay on the mane of a long green billow,

As a gull might rest on her ocean pillow.

It flew, like foam, o'er the ragged bar,

And shook where the waters quiver,

But steady and strong the keel stood far

Up the Asiatic river.

III.

The World's Edge.

MANY an afternoon hath come
Since then to my monastic home,
When memory hath brought to me
In lifelike form and order
The mighty things which I did see
On that wild river border :
Days when the autumn garden grieves
Amid the gentle wreck of leaves,
Strewn by the summer's parting spirit
For winter's stern winds to inherit ;
When silvery sun and fleecy sky
Once more bring feeble summer nigh,
As though she came to some sweet nook
'Mid faded lawns and bowers,

Awhile to take a farewell look
At rash November flowers :
And in this Christian city living
My heart hath flown away,
While memory's deep wells kept giving
Visions of Asia.

We left behind the sea's dull roar,
We left the sand-hills on the shore :
We passed through plains wherein the stream
Ran broad by many a barrow,
Through forests proof against the gleam,
Where the bed was deep and narrow :
Where winds the mighty trees had rocked
For many a hundred year ;
And troops of gentle creatures flocked
To gaze on me with fear,
As though their faces bright and round
Had seen and heard of sight and sound
Nought but the forest motion,
Save when a sea-bird rude had come
And scared the quiet of their home
As it wandered from the ocean.

The twisting branches framed above
Cloisters of gloomy green,
And the bare boughs of yew-trees wove
On either side a screen ;
But here and there the eye might follow
The view through many a woodland hollow,
To where some fountain glittered far
With red leaves all around,
When a stray sunbeam, like a star
Its way through thick shades found ;
And it bred fear in me to see
At times a dry leaf from a tree,
Loosened by some soft hand unseen
From its brother-crowd of healthy green,
Awhile upon the light air quiver,
And faintly fall upon the river.
The wood was past ; and then again
Came grassy slope and open plain ;
And to a lake the river spread,
With groves and green rocks islanded.
When evening shed her mantle there,
Slow-dropping through the twilight air,

Upon the river-bank there stood
Temple, and tower, and streets decayed,
Shrine, palace, arch, and colonnade,—
A vast and kingly solitude.

Dark creepers like a woven vest
Were round each standing pillar pressed ;
Between the broken columns sprung
Horse-tail and rankest adder's-tongue.

No voice of man or beast was heard,
No vesper-song of plaining bird,
No insect hum, no breath did seem
To rise from those that sleep and dream

Among yon cypress rows that stand
For half a league or more inland.

The city lay in mute distress
On the edge of a stretching wilderness.

Where have ye gone, ye townsmen great !
That have left your homes so desolate ?

Where have ye vanished, king and peer !
And left what ye lived for lying here ?

Sin can follow where gold may not,
Pictures and books the damps may rot,

And creepers may hang frail lines of flowers
Down the crevices of ancient towers.
But what hath passed from the soul of mortal,
Be it word or thought of pride,
Hath gone with him through the dim low portal,
And waiteth by his side.

Between the desert and the town,
Upon a grassy treeless down,
High hanging o'er the rapid flood
A house of Christian monks there stood.
One soft low bell kept ever ringing,
While they within were calmly singing
Of her whose garments drop alway
Myrrh, aloes, and sweet cassia.
The chapel-lights with full rich gleam
Threw lines of radiance o'er the stream ;
And tear-drops came, and o'er my mind
Dim thoughts and sadnesses did wind,
And with strong spells my spirit bind.
It was no grave or holy feeling
That from the Christian psalm came stealing,

And never was spot more sadly meet
For lonely prayer and hermit feet.
And fitly, methinks, their chantry stands,
Where the grass encroaches on the sands
At the limits of life's two marvellous lands,—
The land of shadows, forms, and faces,
And the land of spirits' resting-places.
For the psalm they sing is earth's last sound,
Circling and sinking faintly round,
And whispering over the desert's bound.
The bodies that lie where the turf springs highest,
 And little white flowers are growing,
Of all the dead are the very nighest
 To the place where they are going.
For over the sand in the stilly morn,
 When the winds awhile cease blowing,
If you lean and listen, a sound is borne,
Like the last far fall of a hunting-horn,
From the Eden streams, that in channels worn
 By two and two are flowing.
Yes—it was well these monks should tread
Between the living and the dead
On the line by which they are severed,—

That they in their fasts and festal mirth
A blessing and grace should merit
For the far-off races of the earth
From the close-lying world of spirit.

Yes—it was well that they should be
Types of the meek and passion-free,
The humble of earth, that in cloistered room
Fight the world's battles in secret gloom ;
And lands are saved and conquests won,
And the race of high and hard truths run,
And chains snapped off and sins undone :
And all by meek, dejected men,
Earth finds not, learns not how or when.

For they are too divinely great
For fame to sully them with state
And pageant little worth :
From out the unpolluted dead
Their names may not be gathered.
They dwell too deep for man to find
Them out in their calm mirth,
Too high to leave a name behind,
To be played with on the earth.

No idle straying sage may learn
How that ruined city fell ;
All travellers unknowing turn
From the spot where those monks dwell.
Out in the earth fair babes at play
By unseen hands are led away.
Here and there in different climes
Some have been missed at distant times ;
In sport by day they have been taken,
No mortal creature knowing ;
In sleep by night, and did not waken
Their mothers at their going.
Whene'er the monks of that house die,
These lost of earth their room supply,
By angel-leading ever drawn
From their first homes in childhood's dawn ;
And strangely many times must earth
Work in their hearts with her old mirth.

On the edge of the world to them is given
To be within sight and hearing of Heaven,

To see the wild clouds, like castles or ships,
Kissed with the evening's rosy lips,
Sway in the wind on the hills that spread,
Treeless and turfless a barrier dread,
Round the garden our father forfeited.
They dwell alone, those monkish few,
By the down's slant side and the river blue.
No bird o'er the narrow down may fly,
No eagle abroad in yon desert cry,
No beast may come as near as they
To the sealéd centre of Asia.
There is a spot—I know not why—
A spot I often loiter by,
Which ever brings that ruined town,
The monkish house and strip of down,
Back to my fancy, faintly clear,
Until the whole doth strangely seem
A suddenly recovered dream,
Which I had somewhat dreaméd here.
It is the least of English brooks
Through a midland county winding,
In willow flat and meadow nooks
Fresh sorts of wild-flowers finding :

The very least of brooks—with bays
Of standing water furnished,
Where yellow irises upraise
Their phalanx smoothly burnished :
The least of brooks, that nightly show
The white stars' moving faces
'Mid dark and brittle plants that grow
In its wet and shady places.
Much hooded willow-herb is there,
The nun of water-sides, whose care
Doth for herself green convents rear
Of stalk and leaf and glossy spear.
And when I wander there alone,
My spirit doth unrav~~el~~
The lines of thought she made her own
In her visionary travel.

But up the stream with steady will
My boat went undelaying,
While earth stirred calmly in me still,
And set my fancy straying.
And now around is a sandy scene
Without one square or isle of green,

A region, where with no sweet shrouds
The sun, as he doth pass,
Unclothes the white sky of its clouds,
And the green earth of her grass.
But the moon is floating soft above,
And the sands below are glistening ;
There might be sounds in the lights that move
O'er the earth, like the wings of a weary dove,
If there were time for listening.
But the winds from their hid coverts press,
And lift their waving voices high
O'er the broad waste, to magnify
The Master of the wilderness.
So wild was the gleam the moon was lending,
So broken it looked in its descending,
The desert's self seemed heaving ;
One might think that mighty winds came out
To scatter molten moonlight about,
To mar the plain words and meaning things
That, for man, aloft on her glitterings
The quiet orb was weaving.

Then came a royal wood of palms
With their old oriental charms.
The forest stood down to the river,
Yet seemed to stretch away for ever.
League upon league like pillars tall
With one rich shapely capital
In aisles they stood, and like each other,
One palm might be its neighbour's brother.
And all were fair and fresh of hue,
As though in some good plain they grew,
And not in sand-drifts light.
The moisture drunk by thirsty noon
Cool darkness doth replenish soon
With dewdrops sparkling bright,
Dews fed from mists that bear the moon
Sweet company all night.
And down the rings of each smooth bole,
Like sunbeams under the sea;
Quiverings of emerald moonlight stole,
Goldenly swathing the tree.
Turn where one might a roaming eye,
On, on, for ever on—

The multitudinous palm-trees lie,
Countless as stars that stud the sky,
When the rival moon is gone.

Hast thou ever felt in thy lonely room,
Some vigil night, when the hush and gloom
And the nearness of churches round the place
Bring joy in the soul and smiles on the face—
Hast thou ever at such high seasons felt

What seemed like the waving of wings in air,
That an Angel meek hath descended there,
And is kneeling where thou hast lately knelt?
Hast thou known how his presence keeps thee still,
And winds through thy thoughts like a freshening
 rill,

How visions and musings of lightness or pride
 Fall off from thy heart as withered leaves,
And fancy dares not with him at her side
 Think well of the silky webs she weaves?
So was it with me in that little boat
 That stiller and swifter seemed to float.

The flowers and ivy-stalks drooping low
Sweeter and fresher seemed to grow.
A faint scarce visible glory stood
O'er the Crucifix of scented wood ;
And though the seat at the helm looked bare,
I knew that a spirit was sitting there.

The bark had now begun to quiver
Upon the fast, unsteady river,
And foam-bells wavered by ;
And with the lisping palm-tops blending
A stunning waterfall's descending
Grew distinct and nigh.
There was a pause—a brief, dread pause
In a narrow valley's rocky jaws.
A huge, high cliff did steeply bound
A sunless pool with white mists round.
Then came a quiet, whirling motion,
And my boat was lifted slow ;
Like the strong twistings of the ocean,
Where a ship hath gone below.

Oh! gently are the currents flowing
Above that giant-fall,
And gentle sounds, like breezes blowing,
From off the mountains' call,
The herbless mountains nigh at hand
That darkly fence man's earliest land,
Still wept with burning brow,
Which every bright or gloomy faith
Hath faintly looked for after death,
Or made an idol now.

We came unto the river fountains,
Where three of those huge-rooted mountains
Jutted beyond the range,
And clasped within their stony round
A basin and a ring of ground
Of beauty soft and strange.
There in that most lonely dwelling
The rivers of the south are welling
From a silent-rising spring:
And to the surface from below
The silver, salient waters flow
With scarce a murmuring.

Below the sterile cliffs a rim
Of yellow moorland turf the brim
 Of that calm basin closes ;
And right among the tarnished sedge
There hangs and floats a flowering hedge
 Of whitest gleaming roses.
No greenly-gadding rose-branch dips
Into the pool its fragrant lips.
But drooping ever motionless
In one white coronal they press
 The velvet margin shading ;
Like some pale lustrous wreath adorning
A bride upon her marriage morning,—
 Eternal and unfading ;
Breathing faint richness on the lake,
Whose gleamy top winds never shake,
Nor ripples crest, nor rain-drops break :—
Where rose with rose in webs are threading
Thick spells of luscious strength outshedding,
That make the mountain hollow seem
One noonday cup of odorous steam.

Wondrous it is to see on high
The barren mountains to the sky
Their splintered sceptres holding ;
While Heaven's ethereal blue between
The outlines rough doth intervene,
And spends all hours, that fearful scene

To shapes of softness moulding :
Just as the monthly moon's full orb
In her own fairness doth absorb
The boughs of leafy dells,
And purple midnight by sweet laws
Upward and inward ever draws
Church-spires and pinnacles.

Strange is it to the eye that rests
On the long line of mountain crests,
Whose slow descending gaze but falls
On craggy steeps and dark bare walls,—
Strange is it when the earth discloses
That little hollow cup of roses.

Across the pool my boat did steal
In swift and silent order,

And not a ripple from the keel
Ruffled the flowery border.

Above the place where I was left
There was a deep, clear mountain cleft,
As though some keen seraphic sword,
Some Angel of the mighty Lord,
Had carved that portal fair.

To skies beyond of stainless blue
White waving clouds went sailing through,
As if to harbour there.

But poor and little was my hope
To climb that cliff and broken slope,
Till I beheld a straggling line
Of low white roses dimly shine,

As if put there in play,
Or some angelic hand in air
Had scattered rose-wreaths kindly there
To trace and mark the way.

Where each frail flowret had been thrown
There was a little step of stone,
Whereto a man might cling,
Or, if they failed, be lifted on
By angel hand or wing :

And with such faith myself would dare
Upon that long and perilous stair.
How may I tell ye, friends on earth !
With what a mystery of mirth
I stood within that mountain cleft,
With two worlds, on the right and left ?
Boundless, boundless, all unending,
Shadows, souls, and spirits blending—
Midnight and sun-rise, noon and even,
Earth, ocean, vivid-glowing Heaven—
All were at once :—all bathed and blent
In a new white-seeming element,

Wherein they did abide :

Most like unto a hoary sea,
Where through all ages by decree
Time might have no more ebbs, but be
For ever at high-tide.

It travelled on in mighty rings,
And with a clamorous motion ;
Like a sea-bird sleeping on her wings
And sinking to the ocean.

I stood within the mountain-cleft
With two worlds, on the right and left—

The land of shadows, forms, and faces,
And the land of spirits' resting-places.
Apart, and separate they were,
With other sky and sea and air :
And yet they seemed but one to me—
 Each in the other comprehended,
 In lovely separation blended,
Like two sides of a mystery.

Oft have I seen in out-doors dreams
 Lovely and dreadful things
Brought close upon my soul by gleams,—
 Majestic glimmerings.
But, when I deemed the vision bright
 Unfolding from the soul of night
 Unto my touch would press,
The troublous pleasure, that did creep
 Through every vein, broke up my sleep,
 And the appearance swiftly drew
 Back into midnight's caverned blue
 And starry silentness ;

As rainbows to my childish eye
Withdrew into the cloudy sky,
When gazed at over-earnestly.
Thus hath this dream been broken up,
And gentle sleep's well-mingled cup
 Been spilt upon the earth ;
But dreams that promise fairest blessing,
Yet cease to be in the possessing—
Why blame them more than other things,
Since Heaven in love so checks the springs
 Of every mortal mirth ?

LXXI.

Oxford in Winter.

I.

CITY of wildest sunsets—which do pile
Their dark-red castles on that woody brow !
Fair as thou art in summer's moonlight smile,
There are a hundred cities fair as thou.
But still with thee alone all seasons round
Beauty and change in their own right abound.

II.

Whole winter days swift rainy lights descend,
Ride o'er the plain upon the swelling breeze,
And in a momentary brightness blend
Walls, towers, and flooded fields, and leafless
trees :
Lights of such glory as may not be seen
In the deep northern vales and mountains green.

III.

Coy city, that dost swathe thy summer self
In willow lines and elmy avenue,
Each winter comes, and brings some hidden pelf,
Buttress or Cross or gable out to view :
While his thin sunlight frugal lustre sheds
On the straight streams and yellow osier beds.

IV.

But thy main glory is that winter wood,
With its dead fern and holly's christmas green,
And mosses pale and beech-trees, that have wooed
Their withered leaves, which yet perchance are
seen
Struggling to reach the spring, as though for them
New sap would rise from out the grateful stem.

V.

A wood in winter is a goodly sight,
With branch and trunk and whitely-withered
weed :
Chiefly a wood like this, where many a night
In Stuart times the cavalier's fast steed

Spurned the dry leaves through all the rustling
copse,
And waked the cushat in the oak-tree tops.

VI.

Some darksome night, when, as a welcome boon,
Down giant steps the stealthy beams should
glide,
And gentle deer lie sleeping in the moon
With their own fairy shadows at their side ;
While through the frosty night-air every tower
In Abingdon and Oxford tolls the hour.

VII.

And art thou not, deep wood ! in many a cove
Peopled with holy thoughts and hymn-like
sounds ?
Hast thou not heard, and they who hear do love,
*His*¹ calm church-music in thy secret grounds,
Who oft, if I misread not every line,
Hath tuned his lyre in many a nook of thine ?

¹ The author of "The Christian Year."

VIII.

Yea, on a poet's word, good men should go,
And up and down thy lurking valleys climb ;
Thy faded woodlands, thy fair withered show,
Are sweet to see ; and at Cathedral time
'Tis sweet on some wild afternoon to hear,
Far off, those loud complaining bells brought near.

IX.

They may have sadness, too, whene'er the wind
Keeps moaning here and there about the woods ;
And fear may track their homeward steps behind
Along the moated path and reedy floods ;
For in the stream the moon's white image rides,
And, as they change, she also changeth sides.

X.

Why is it, city of all seasons ! why—
So few have homes where there are homes so
fair ?
They come and go : it is thy destiny,
Which for its very greatness we must bear,
To be a nation's heart, thou city dear !
Sending the pure blood from thee every year.

LXXII.

Cambridge.

Ah me ! were ever river-banks so fair,
 Gardens so fit for nightingales as these ?
 Were ever haunts so meet for summer breeze,
 Or pensive walk in evening's golden air ?
 Was ever town so rich in court and tower
 To woo and win stray moonlight every hour ?
 One thing thou lackest much : the wild wind
 swells,
 The feast-days come, and yet night silent falls
 On the poor listening stream and patient halls ;
 Thou art a voiceless place,—thou hast no bells.
 Yea, but for thy mute shrines, thou wert a town
 That might grey Oxford's vocal towers disdain,
 Where Isis flows and Cherwell ripples down,
 Timing their several voices to the strain !

LXXIII.

Past Friends.

ARE there such things as friends that pass away ?
 When each fresh opening season of our life,
 Through the dim-struggling crowd and weary
 strife,
 Brings kindred spirits nigh, whom we would pray
 Might live with us, and by our death-bed stay,
 Do these, our chosen ones, sink down at last
 Into the common grave of visions past ?
 Ah ! there are few men in the world can say
 They had a dream which they do not dream still ;
 Few fountains in the heart which cease to play,
 When those whose touch evoked them at their will
 Sit there no more : and I my dreams fulfil
 When to high Heaven my tongue still nightly bears
 Old names, like broken music, in my prayers.

LXXIV.

Sonnet-writing.

TO F. W. F.

YOUNG men should not write sonnets, if they dream
 Some day to reach the bright bare seats of fame :
 To such, sweet thoughts and mighty feelings seem
 As though, like foreign things, they rarely came.
 Eager as men, when haply they have heard
 Of some new songster, some gay-feathered bird,
 That hath o'er blue seas strayed in hope to find
 In our thin foliage here a summer home—
 Fain would they catch the bright things in their
 mind,
 And cage them into sonnets as they come.
 No; they should serve their wants most sparingly,
 Till the ripe time of song, when young thoughts
 fail,
 Then their sad sonnets, like old bards, might be
 Merry as youth, and yet grey-haired and hale.

LXXV.

The Saying of St. Hermas.

“Concupisces opus tuum, et salvus eris.”

I.

THE whole world hath gone out to buy,
Estates and goods to multiply :
The sunny field, the garden ground,
The woods that gird the city round,
The cedar hall, the ample street,
The quay where busy merchants meet ;
All places and all spirits burn,
And for the world’s weak treasure yearn.

II.

Servant of Christ ! be thou like these,
All day and night forego thine ease ;
Crave, covet, lust, and labour still,
Till thou the Master’s storehouse fill.

Be crafty at thy toil, and ply
 All seasons round thy usury.
 Deny thyself, and hoard thy gold
 For Him who died for thee of old.

III.

Let not thy life be soft and free,
 Cushion and couch are not for thee.
 Brave shining stone and raiment fair
 Leave thou for kings and priests to wear.
 For them let rich robes be unfurled
 Who bear God's Name within the world.
 Thy throne, O man of God, is yet
 Behind thick clouds and trials set.

IV.

Let go all mortal grief and mirth ;
 And, as the world is wise for earth,
 To thee like wisdom shall be given
 To covet still and hoard for Heaven.
 Empty on priests and heathen lands
 And widows pale thy willing hands :
 While prince and peer of old names dream,
 Let alms thy sin-pledged soul redeem.

v.

Wide, Churchman ! is thy mother's field,
A hundredfold her valleys yield.

Hoard, and then waste : oh ! scatter round
Thy seed in faith upon the ground.

When men are deep in feast and mirth,
Steal out and bury gold in earth,
Then back into the world and ply
Once more thy hard trade cheerily.

LXXVI.

College Life.

THERE is fair beauty here, and sweet church homes,
And a high call to every stedfast heart
To keep chaste watch, and fill a solemn part
Whereto weak self-disturbance rarely comes ;
And had I power to knock away below
The frail, false props that long have borne me up,
I might have nerve to drain the royal cup,
Nor keep it to my lips, as I do now.
Yet amid Shrines, and Rites, and Forms of fear,
And meek men growing good and great around,
As though their roots had struck in holy ground,
My poor base soul is starving feebly here,
A young, unshapely tree, for ever giving
The fruits of loveless days and lonely living.

LXXVII.

On my Pupil's Portrait.

DEAR Boy ! when I do look into thy face
 Glittering with sunny thoughts, I fain would bless
 Thee for thy beauty and thy boyishness,
 For the fair brow youth crowns with freshest
 grace,
 For the light spirits and the humours wild,
 Wherewith my sadness is infected so
 That years drop off me, and dull thoughts forego
 A reign which o'er my heart hath not been mild.
 Yea, for all this I bless thee ; but a part
 More grave and stern is mine, for they commit
 To my safe charge, young boy ! thy merry heart,
 So gentle one hard word hath wounded it.
 Oh thou shalt hear no more hard words from me,
 But, when thou sinn'st, my prayers shall set thee
 free.

LXXVIII.

First Love.

I.

I HAVE been long without a home,
And yearned too much for one ;
And scanty are the deeds of faith
My lonely heart hath done :
For many a night my weary bed
Hath felt the weak tears run.

II.

Cold armour of ambitious dreams
I bade my soul to wear,
And to false friendship's wildfire sweet
Have laid my spirit bare ;
And some few times pure heavenly thoughts
Awhile have lighted there.

III.

But still my sickness grew, and still
The fever gained worse power ;
And every star that gentlest shone
Above my dreary tower
Hath waned long since, or waneth now,
More palely every hour.

IV.

But I have felt thy light low voice,
Thy soft eye's languid beam,
And light and colour have come back
Unto my purest dream,
And to my heart the old fresh blood
Hath mounted in a stream.

V.

Health, power, deep gladness have come back
With shouts and songs of bliss ;
Of all my loves in this bright crowd
There is not one I miss—
Oh ! never mortal soul hath had
A wakening like this !

VI.

No tossing now on feverish thoughts,
No sick heart's burning swell,
No waiting day by day to bid
Each new false hope farewell,
Free, without chains, my spirit starts
And breaks the long dull spell.

VII.

It is not passion's lurid light,
Nor friendship's meteor way,
False gleams that through pale summer nights
From far-off tempests play,
But one rich golden orb that shines
Steady and large all day

VIII.

A full, warm, fostering light wherein
The heart's best foliage springs,
A flame to whose sweet sternness faith
Each brittle purpose brings,
An altar-fire where hope is fed,
And prayer and praise find wings.

IX.

Thou art too young for me to tell
My hidden love to thee ;
And, till fit season, it must burn
In darkest privacy,
For years must pass and fortunes change
Till such fit season be.

X.

Young as thou art, hadst thou but seen
This withered heart before,
And poured thy love, as o'er some plant
Thou dost fresh water pour,
And watched the fragrance and the hue
Grow into it once more—

XI.

Thou wouldst, mayhap, have felt within
Thy first and sweetest strife,
And marvelled much at the new taste
And power it gave to life ;
And so less like a dream had been
My first dream of a Wife

LXXIX.

The Senses.

TO

ROUNDELL PALMER, ESQ.

FELLOW OF MAGDALENE COLLEGE, OXFORD,

This Poem

IS

VERY AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

IN MEMORY OF

OLD CONVERSATIONS.

T

The Senses.

RICH soil of ancient springs ! dear Earth !

The womb whence I was made,

In whose green treasure-house the birth

Thou lentest must be laid.

Mistress of Christian symbols, glowing

In letters of dread meaning,

In tides of song-like language flowing,

Where minstrel ears are leaning :

Where day and night

Spell words of might

By gloom or brightness hidden,

And sunmer hours

In bells of flowers

Sing songs, and are not chidden.

I never called thee gloomy,—never
From out thy full, fresh-flowing river
 Have failed to draw sweet water,
And still thine echo in me rings
True to the faintest murmurings
 That constant stream hath brought her.
So have I gazed on thee, as one
Who sits from rise to set of sun
 In Troy's dim-furrowed plain,
Scanning the letters half-effaced,
And lines where some old Greek hath traced
 The titles of the slain.
So strive I, as a baffled lover,
The wondrous science to recover,
 Laid up in Eden still,
When our wise father gave a name
To every beast and bird that came,
 From the depths of his own skill.
All over doth this outer earth
 An inner earth infold,
And sounds may reach us of its mirth
 Over its pales of gold.

There spirits live, unwedded all,
From the shades and shapes they wore,
Though still their printless footsteps fall
By the hearths they loved before.

We know them not, nor hear the sound
They make in threading all around :
Their office sweet and mighty prayer
Float without echo through the air.

Yet sometimes in unworldly places,
Soft sorrow's twilight vales,
We meet them with uncovered faces
Outside their golden pales,

Though dim, as they must ever be,
Like ships far-off and out at sea,
With the sun upon their sails.

Not unobserved doth April bring,
With rain-drops sparkling on her wing
From many a silver shower,
Her dewy prophecies of spring,
Close leaf and show of blossoming,
In every bank and bower.

The breezes with their fertile wooing
Earth's long-night fetters are undoing :
And she within her priestly vest
Takes back her soul into her breast.
In every blossom there is fruit,
And every flower swells at its root,
Till stalk and lily-blade are seen
Piercing the mould with spikes of green.
And jealous plants all sheathed and furled
Come up with veils into the world,
And brittle shoots, where June discloses
Jewelled lines of crimson roses.
All these, ere winter's season hoary,
Have had a blooming and a glory,
Have left their glory, and were dead,
That so they might be quickenèd.
O faithless ones ! that cannot bear
Sharp pain or wan dejection,
Come witness in the vernal air
Earth's yearly resurrection !
For what are we but winter roots,
Wrapping in many folds our fruits,
Which cannot ripen here ?

Our spirits from their mortal birth
Spend only in the soil of earth
One season of the year.

I do not scorn our earthly life :
It is a mystery, a strife,
A crowd of marvellings,
Our shadows, fashions, and degrees,
Elsewhere have glowing substances,
Which we may reach, when death shall please
To give us back our wings.

We have imprisoned by our sin
Man's dread intelligences,
And broken lights are flooded in
Upon them by our senses.

They are the inlets to our spirit,
Ebbing, flowing ever
From waters we shall once inherit
In Heaven's upper river.

They are the windows of our soul,
From whence the captive gazes,

And through them from the very pole,
Sunlight and moonlight ever roll,
While she her wild eye raises.
She sitteth there a captive maiden,
Upon the cold bars leaning,
Until her bosom is dread-laden
With all earth's lustrous meaning.
Sight's ether-wingèd visions seeing,
Sound's golden circles hearing,
With Touch dissolving space and being,
And shades instead appearing :—
Languid with such access of joy,
The soul herself betaketh
To another sense of sweet alloy,
Which earth, green earth awaketh.
For what is Smell that wafteth by
But the inward voice of memory ?
Forward or up she never leadeth,
But houshold melancholy breedeth ;
Hindering with fragrant wiles our haste,
With by-gone pleasures staying,

Forbidding hearts such wealth to waste,
Earth's backward call obeying,
Waking the scent-embalmèd past
With exquisite delaying.

Dear Sense! and yet I dare not dream
Thy spells which all so earthly seem
Are only earth's creating,
And have not from our Eden home
To every several flowret come
With breeze-like undulating.

But Taste, the sense that feeds the spirit,
Hath gifts ourselves could never merit,
Impartings rich of heavenly mirth
Brought out before its time on earth,
Good things, good foretastes, angel-cheer,
Presage of deathless might,
That makes the soul her wings uprear,
Like eagles in their flight.

Sit, then, O Soul! thy Master praising,
And through those windows keenly gazing.
With awe thy vileness suiting;

Through them the inner kingdom ranging,

All things to spirit ever changing,

Earth to Heaven commuting.

Dread Inlets ! most mysterious Five !

Linking our shadows with the skies,

By whom dead forms are made alive,

And symbols grow realities !

And yet these Five may not be all :—

This college-garden is but small

With some few dozen trees ;

And yet scarce one was meant to grow,

Where our long northern winters blow

Within the English seas.

This grew by some huge western river,

This to the desert wind did quiver

In Araby the Blest :

Yon by the warm sea-shore might smile

Away in some West-Indian isle,

In lordlier foliage drest.

Who would have dreamed in those south homes,

Where noxious dampness never comes,

That in the heart of tropic trees
A hidden sense was moulded,
To shield them from the shower and breeze,
And be far off across the seas
In centuries unfolded ?

Like powers in hearts of flesh reside,
Like buried senses there abide ;
Senses and Inlets fine, all over,
Which our last rising may discover.

Our bodies here may be the tomb
Of powers and motions hidden,
Which birth shall loosen from their womb
Elsewhere when it is bidden :

Fresh Touch and Sight, and other hands
Unformed,—for work of other lands ;
And secret Ears wherewith we may
Perchance hear spirits speaking,

And Smells to guide us on our way
To the fadeless flowers we're seeking :—

Verdure laid up in us, not wanted
For the hours of mortal breath,

Ready to bloom in us transplanted
By the mystery of death.

Thought hath a double stream, whose falls
Keep murmuring in her sounding halls,
Rising and sinking, faint and clear,
As breezes bear their echoes near ;
One springs 'mid outward forms and shows,
And winds as it is bidden ;
The other veils its wells, and flows
In a woodland channel hidden ;
And at far times reveals its floods
In whitest gleamings through the woods,
O'er roots of marble breaking,
Or in a hollow green and cool
Through many a modest lingering pool
Its amber waters taking.
We have no spells to turn its flow,
Or bid its voices come and go ;
For on its face are mirrored fair
The lights and shapes that are elsewhere,

And tranquil fear and shadowy love
Brood o'er its basins from above.
But oft in sudden turns of thought
Both fountains are together brought,
And mix their streams awhile ;
And fancy then herself is seating
To catch the sounds and whispers fleeting,
Where Heaven and Earth in streams are meeting
And rippling waters smile.
Again in hours of gentle daring
The soul hath traced the brook some way,
Its darkly-twisting channel wearing,
And coloured pebbles downward bearing
From where its secret fountains play.
Benighted in far woods she sees
Forms shift about among the trees,
And vanish here and there,
And uttered by them in their fleetness
Soft voices of an earthly sweetness
Keep trembling on the air.
Then, when fancy's stars are waning,

The soul her wonted home regaining,
Yet still those mystic scenes retaining,
The sounds and visions do impress
Themselves upon her loneliness
With such a dimly-living power,
That she in many an after-hour
Beholds in strange and foreign places
Familiar forms and household faces ;
As though erewhile in vision dread
That place or room were visited,
And strangers' voices echo round
Like rings and links of magic sound.
She listens well to what is spoken,
As though the words were old ;
And watches for some random token,
The wonder to unfold.

These are the sounds and shadowy sight
That came in waking dream,
When she was wandering in the night
Far up the heavenly stream.

Oft too in slumber's pathless mountains
The heart breaks up her ancient fountains,

Which had for years been sealed,
And the whole spirit overflows
With waters that chance-dreams disclose
In some forgotten field.

Tree-top and rock, and nodding wood
Group wildly in that whirling flood,
While Earth and Heaven meet and part
In giddy ebb and flow of heart :—

Giddy, yet held by some strong tie
Fast in the beating springs,
Which up above in sympathy
Keep time by murmurings.

For that bright stream's mysterious powers
And all its secret going
Burst on the surface most in hours
When sleep is o'er us flowing ;

Like gurgling wells and waterfalls
Which, heard in stilly nights,
Put music in the breezy calls
That come from mountain heights.

All these—quick turns of sparkling thought,
Strange places known again,

And dreams at hollow midnight brought,
Are openings by these waters wrought,
 And Heaven awhile made plain.
They, who will listen at their soul,
May hear deep down that current roll,
 Its waters sweetly timing ;
And patient ears that listen long
May catch the fashion of its song
 And science of its chiming,
Nay, sometimes by its far faint airs
Young hearts are taken unawares ;
As a stranger, sleeping on the mountains,
 Is waked by waters in their mirth,
Causing, as they tinkle from their fountains,
 Audible music through the earth.

This is the stream, the sacred Gift,
By which our outward world we lift
 Into a world within,
And, for that earth is dull and dark,
Where'er these waters drop, a spark
 Of upper light they win.

And thus two worlds, two lives are ours,
And men move on with angel powers,
For angel graces staying ;
And earth becomes a pavement fair,
Since deathless seeds are glowing there
With Christian inlaying.

For this outward vest and this world we see
With its green and its blue and white,
With its folding-doors of day and night,
Is the silent or voiceful mystery,
That burns at the restless heart of a youth,
As he wanders here and there for the truth ;
When all that he has and all that he knows
And his spirit's fertile fountains
Were absorbed in his childhood from the shows
Of rivers and woods and mountains :
When he communed little or none with books,
Which are dead men's empty biers,
That imprint on our features solemn looks
But cannot draw our tears.
The earth is a frail transparent vase
With heavenly lamps behind,

The light coming through is tinted, and draws
Figures upon the mind.

Thought's hidden stream from its upper springs
Hath brought us a few interpretings.

If the world would be still, our hearts might hear
What the secret is, when the stream winds near.
The earth is a church where no bells are rung,
And her beauty is slighted for want of tongue ;
But the stream in ourselves is her voice brought
back

From Heaven where it was taken,
That the minstrel spirit may have no lack
Of dulcet sounds to waken.

But a murmuring here and a murmuring there,
And a half-word failing on the air,
Piece by piece we must weave in one,
Till the words in music and rhythm run,
And the poet tell the meaning of all
That obscure and beauteous ritual.

So are we gifted ; so we live,
Scarce knowing what we are :—
Deep-colored flowers that feebly give
Their scents unto the air.

So are we gifted; so we die;

We take our gifts with us:

With the green lives that round us lie

The way is ever thus.

And so, when we rise from our chastening gloom,

We are born afresh of a stainless womb,

And the soul, that hath been like a wandering
bride,

Wanders no more, and is satisfied;

For the likeness she wears was the secret thing
That lured her on in her wandering.

And joy and love to the spirit are given,

New colored and shaped in the moulds of
Heaven;

And our rising shall be like a wondering flower

That looks on the earth in her summer power

With pride of its earliest opening hour,—

A thing that may well surprisèd be

With its own fair scent and bravery.

LXXX.

England's Trust.

I joy that the times are dark and dreary,
I joy that the earth is old,
That the hands of our priests are weak and weary,
And the hearts of our nobles cold.
I joy that the good and few are fearing,
And the camp and court at play,
That the swift-riding world is out of hearing,
When the watchword comes this way.
I joy for the signs of strife and trouble,
And for England's awakening might,
For the voices deep that are sounding double,
Like the striking of clocks at night.

I joy for the words that all are speaking,
A language the earth had lost,
For the hardy thoughts and steady seeking
Whose path may not be crossed.

The nation too long hath weakly striven
In the craft of her own wise hand,
For it is not through laws or wisdoms that
Heaven
Deals health to a gold-stricken land.

I joy for this day that the calm and agèd
Cease vaunting of England through fear,
It tells that the thirst for self-praise is assuagèd,
And the shock to rouse life in her near.

I joy for the young that they lay not her honour
In the stir of song and story,
Nor in that which mere blood of her sons hath
won her,
Her world-wide name of glory.

I joy for the loss of the noisy gladness
That hath made late ages dull ;
But more I joy for the humbling sadness
Whereof true hearts are full.

Trust may not be in wisdoms hoary,
Nor in wealth and greatness blent,
But in the faith that this dream of glory
Came to us for punishment.

LXXXI.

Thirlmere.

I.

THERE are two times in life, to love and fear,—
Two times like birth and death ;
They are two different echoes that we hear,
Which Heaven uttereth.

II.

These are not real—the strong-vaulted sky, ·
The heavy-flowing seas,
The rocky roots of hills, and lakes that lie
In hollows deep like these.

III.

Heaven comes with her two voices, old and young,
Creating these for us ;
They are but mystic shadows dimly flung
From off our spirits thus.

IV.

All hope, all joy, all mortal life with such
Sweet sadness is inlaid :
And all things have on them from Heaven a touch
Of sunshine or of shade.

V.

I have been here before, yet scarce can tell
The outline of the hills ;
The light is changed,—another voice doth swell
In those wild-sounding rills.

VI.

I have been here before : in sun and shade
A blythe green place it seemed :
Here have I talked with friends, sweet songs have
made,
And lovely things have dreamed.

VII.

And I have ridden to the lake this day
With more than common gladness ;
But hill and flood upon me strangely weigh
With new and fearful sadness.

VIII.

And all bright forms without me I would take—
A redbreast on the wall,
A buzzard flapping o'er the cold blue lake,
A hundred streams that call

IX.

One to another all Helvellyn over,
The light upon the pine,
Yon single pine on high, that can discover
There is a sun to shine :

X.

But, above all, the boy who at my side,
For boyhood hath no morrow,
Bound up in his own merry thoughts, doth chide
His dull friend for his sorrow ;

XI.

Yea—above all, that boy to whom is given
Better than monarch's pelf,
To love, and such love ever is of Heaven,
One older than himself :—

xii.

All these bright things into my soul I take,
That they may shed light there,
And they but give cold blueness to the lake,
Cold brightness to the air.

xiii.

Oh ! speak to me, thou lake ! thou mountain brow !
In that old voice of joy—
Oh ! speak to me, as ye are speaking now
To that pure-hearted boy.

xiv.

“ Nay, bid not us, we are but voiceless things,
Shadows and pomps for thee ;
We can but echo the dread voice that rings
From Heaven’s blue canopy :

xv.

“ And thou hast deadened it ; we cannot hear
Through that thick soul of thine ;
We are mute slaves, and waiting mutely here
For thee to give the sign.

xvi.

“ Sunshine and shade, sweet wind and pearly
shower—

All these we have of thee ;
Our light and gloom we borrow every hour
From thine infinity.

xvii.

“ We have no depth, no substance of our own,
No life which we inherit,—
Oh ! blame not us ; we are pale outlines thrown
From thine undying spirit.”

LXXXII.

Lent.

I.

Yes ! I have walked the world these two months
past
With quick free step, loud voice, and youth's
light cheer ;
And dull and weary were the shadows cast
From the dark Cross and Lent's dim portals
near.

II.

Yes ! I rode up with such a noisy state
And retinue of all things bright and fair,
And reached in this new pilgrim guise the gate,
As though my dreams might have free passage
there.

III.

Dreams of far travel, visionary love,
Hopes, memories, sweet songs, and sunny
faces,
Cheering each other on, with me did move
Some way on Lent's keen roads and desert
places.

IV.

And many a pilgrim wending o'er the plain,
With face half-veiled and tear-drops flowing
fast,
Marvelled perchance at the unpriestly train,
When I and my strange servitors rode past.

V.

But every stone that lay along the way,
Wounding the feet of those who travelled
by,
Each sleety shower, chill blast, and cloudy
day,
Scattered my poor soft-living company.

VI.

Thus as my spirit more and more drunk in
 The deep mysterious dimness of the time,
 Old forms waxed pale, and lines and shapes
 of sin
 Wore hardly off, and my baptismal prime

VII.

Grew into colour and distinctness there ;—
 But my blythe train and equipage were
 gone,
 The songs and sunny smiles ; my heart was
 bare,
 With Lent all darkening round me, and
 alone.

VIII.

O joy of all our joys ! to be bereft
 Of our false powers to make the world so
 dear !
 O joy of all our joys ! to be thus left
 In our wild youth, with none but Jesus near !

IX.

How sweetly then shall Lent's few Sundays shock
The sadness which itself hath now grown
sweet,

Like the soft striking of an old church-clock,
Making the heart of summer midnight beat.

X.

How sweetly now shall this most holy gloom
Gather and double on my chastened heart,
Circling with dark bright folds the garden Tomb,
Where Lent and I, like Christian friends, shall
part.

LXXXIII.

Half a Heart.

I.

COME, I will give thee half a heart.
If that will do to love ;
And if I gave thee all, dear friend,
It would but worthless prove.

II.

Thou art too pure to see or know
The ills that in me dwell :
It is most right to keep our sins
From those we love so well.

III.

So then I warn thee, do not think
My fitful love untrue :
I have another darker self,
Which thou must sometime view.

IV.

Men take me, change me if they may,
And love me if they can;
Few can do that; few choose, like thee,
A double-hearted man.

V.

My better self shall be thy friend,
My worse self not thy foe,
And to love light in time perchance,
May make my darkness go.

VI.

If I should seem to play thee false,
Then pour thy love through prayer:
It is sin's time; my better heart
Withdraws itself elsewhere.

VII.

And weary not if I do still
New light or gloom disclose:
What else in sooth can poets be
But men whom no one knows?

LXXXIV.

The Latin Litany at St. Mary's.

I.

O SWEET, most sweet and penitential sound !
In tides of chaste, austere old music setting
O'er these few kneelers' hearts, at penance found,
Weary with strife and unwise knowledge-getting.

II.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
Each low response, with organ notes attended,
Loosens some link of sin which sadly bound
Souls where the Church and world were too much
blended.

III.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
Circling the Altar and the pillars grasping,
Breathing a soul into the marble ground
Where knees are bending and mute hands are
clasping !

IV.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
O rite most dear, most dread, and full of Heaven !
Welcome is thy calm day, as it comes round,
To have our sins and our soft lives forgiven.

V.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
Thy cadence thrills on me in times of sinning ;
Thy grieving fall hath oft my soul unbound,
Its thoughts and dreams to calmer currents win-
ning.

VI.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
O rite most dear ! that in weak hours of vaunting,
Languors of earthly love, or strivings crowned,
Still keeps my heart a shrine with plaintive haunt-
ing.

LXXXV.

Queen Mary among the Benefactors.

[Recited before Sermon at certain times in St. Mary's, Oxford.]

It is a noble ritual,—to tell
 Out before God our Founders name by name ;
 It is a Christian rite saints will not blame,
 And doth beseem this quiet city well.
 Many and mighty in the bead-roll swell :
 But, when I think of who we are and where,
 Thy name doth vibrate strangely on the air,
 Stern Benefactress ! Strange, yet sweet, it falls
 With Charles and Laud, as though a church were
 Heaven,
 Where good deeds stay and evil is forgiven :
 Strangely, yet sweetly, to the heart it calls,
 Warning strife off from these memorial halls ;
 Scarcely recalling thy disastrous sway,
 Yet taking thoughts of cold, rude hate away.

LXXXVI.

Two Faiths.

Oh pray for me!—thou know'st what prayer I
need.

What is it to be one in whose weak heart
Two faiths are lodged, while thought and feeling
bleed

In the wild war; yet neither will depart?
What is it to be one, spell-drawn to stay
For the completing of his nature, trembling
Between two different characters each day,
And seem to his harsh friends to be dissembling?
Watch me, as thou hast watched Mosella's waves
Bringing her clear, sweet waters down from
Treves,—

To Neuendorf along yon southern shore
Breasting with hope the turbulent green Rhine,
Till the old flood claims both his banks once
more:—

Pray on—pray on: like fate may yet be mine.

LXXXVII.

Proud Poets.

NAY, thou hast ceased to be a poet: pride
Hath all displaced the heavenly gift within;
Music of soul can live with many a sin,
But will not with a haughty spirit bide.
A bard is one on whom, as in a shower,
Man's mighty deeds and lovely arts rain power;—
One whose quick soul hath fetched another sense,
An inlet deep, where earth with her green things
Mounts in a tide of vast intelligence,
And mysteries that need interpretings.
Can they be proud who walk across the earth,
Like fountains, shedding waters for the weary,
Casting up truths and symbols to give mirth
Unto the restless, light unto the dreary?

LXXXVIII.

Aged Cities.

I HAVE known cities with the strong-armed Rhine
 Clasping their mouldered quays in lordly sweep ;
 And lingered where the Maine's low waters shine
 Through Tyrian Frankfort ; and been fain to weep.
 'Mid the green cliffs where pale Mosella laves
 That Roman sepulchre, imperial Trèves.
 Ghent boasts her street, and Bruges her moon-
 light square ;
 And holy Mechlin, Rome of Flanders, stands,
 Like a queen-mother, on her spacious lands ;
 And Antwerp shoots her glowing spire in air.
 Yet have I seen no place, by inland brook,
 Hill-top, or plain, or trim arcaded bowers,
 That carries age so nobly in its look,
 As Oxford with the sun upon her towers.

LXXXIX.

Unkind Judging.

To be thought ill of, worse than we deserve,
 To have hard speeches said, cold looks displayed
 By those who should have cheered us when we
 swerve,— .

Is one of Heaven's best lots, and may be made
 A treasure ere we know it, a lone field
 Which to hot hearts may bitter blessings yield.
 Either we learn from our past sins to shrink,
 When their full guilt is kept before our eye,
 And, thinking of ourselves as others think,
 We so are gainers in humility :—
 Or the harsh judgments are a gloomy screen,
 Fencing our altered lives from praise and glare ;
 And plants that grow in shades retain their green,
 While unmeet sternness kindly chills the air.

XC.

Admonition.

I know thee not, bright friend ! but that thy looks
Do draw me to thee, with thy boyhood rushing,
As a sweet fever, through thy veins, and gushing
From thy clear eyes in merry falls, like brooks
Leaping, clear crystal things, from their stone
fountains,
And waking echoes in the noonday mountains.
This is no place for thee ; be warned in time.—
Thou must go haunt some free and breezy knoll,
Ere this grey city come with spell sublime,
Freezing her heartless state into thy soul.
Thou hast been surely cradled out of doors,
And the great forms that nursed thee are the
truest ;
And, though these courts were Heaven's own
azure floors,
Yet days are coldest where the skies are bluest.

XCI.

Grisedale Tarn.

I.

WERE I a man upon whose life
An awful, untold sin did weigh,
And Heaven vouchsafed not pain or strife
Enough to do that guilt away,
And it were well in mine old age
To build myself an hermitage,

II.

I would not choose a savage place
Where, all the heavenly seasons round,
I should read anger in the face
Of nature's bleak and joyless ground ;
And winds and streams have voices rude,
Wherewith to mar the solitude.

III.

No ; for the many sins that stain me
Barren and lonely should it be,
High up where nature might unchain me
With her strong mountain liberty,
With charms that would through sin-born fears
Keep fresh and free the source of tears.

IV.

In yon pale hollow would I dwell,
Where waveless Grisedale meekly lies,
And the three clefts of grassy fell
Let in the blueness of the skies ;
And lowland sounds come travelling up
To echo in that mountain cup.

V.

The morning light on mottled stones,
The unfledged ravens' clamorous mirth,
The broken gush and hollow moans
Of waters struggling in the earth,
And the white lines of bleating sheep
Crossing, far up, the dewy steep ;

VI.

These, with the storms and calms, mayhap
Enough of sight and sound would make
For one in mountain nature's lap,
A dweller by her loneliest lake ;
While banners bright of kindled mist
Above his head might hang and twist.

VII.

Where from the tarn the shallow brook
By rough Helvellyn shapes its way,
The window of my cell should look
Eastward upon the birth of day ;
Nor should the place disfigured be
By garden-plot or favorite tree.

VIII.

One blame would I incur, nor fear
To wound the stranger's curious eye ;
Some sceptral foxgloves I would rear
Upon the yellow turf hard by :
They might to an ascetic serve
As types and teachers of reserve.

IX.

From wanton summer's broadest sun
Their perfect splendour they withhold ;
The regal blossoms, one by one,
In single, separate pomp unfold,
Shedding their frail red bells away
In patient, gradual decay.

X.

See with what pleasant slowness there,
When hedge and wood are past their prime,
Late summer with her fertile air
Is forced that kingly stalk to climb ;
As though the world should read therein
The Christian way deep truths to win.

XI.

In every cleft a kneeling-place
And cushion of dead fern should lie ;
From three such loop-holes I might trace
Meanings and shapes in earth and sky—
Huge emblems would they make for me
Of the Most Holy Trinity !

XCII.

Larch-trees.

ALL men speak ill of thee, unlucky Tree !—
Spoiling with graceless line the mountain edge,
Clothing with awkward sameness rifted ledge
Or uplands swelling brokenly and free :
Yet shalt thou win some few good words of me.
Thy boughs it is that teach the wind to mourn,
Haunting deep inland spots and groves forlorn
With the true murmurs of the plaintive sea.
When tuft and shoot on vernal woodlands shine,
Who hath a green unwinterlike as thine ?
And when thou leanest o'er some beetling brow,
With pale thin twigs the eye can wander through,
There is no other tree on earth but thou
Which brings the sky so near and makes it seem
so blue.

XCIII.

Written in a Green-house.

WHY are your scents so faint, your stems so slight ?
Why are your languid leaves outnumbered so
By wealth of bell and blossom ? Would ye go
Back to Pacific lands and eastern light
From whence ye came, bringing your juicy powers
To heal and lull ? But ailing man hath need
In his sad lot of a botanic creed ;
So ye are summoned from your thousand bowers,
Unwilling Congress from the world of flowers !
And a young bard, wise idler, here may pore
O'er the wild learning and the uncouth store
Of studious boyhood's desultory hours,
Rifling all books of travel, far and near,
To shape a home for each exotic here.

XCIV.

Brathay Bridge.

MONTH after month more languid do I grow,
Struggling and striving in life's sterile round,
And in each strife and struggle losing ground,
Letting the anchors of my spirit go.

The morning long upon this sunny stone
Solaced and calmed by Brathay's flooded noise,
For last night's weakness I would fain atone
By putting from me love's unhopeful joys.
But each wise vow and self-renouncing speech
For their untruth the river, as it goes,
Bears down ; and, ever as the water flows,
My better self flows past me out of reach ;
And the wild sounds, in my soothed ears so long,
Steal my soul's strength, debasing it to song.

XCV.

The Brathay Kingfisher.

THOU hast a fair dominion here, Sir King !
And yon tall stone beneath the alder stem
Seems a meet throne for a gay crownéd thing
That wears so well its tawny diadem.
Thou hast a fair dominion—pools and bays
With heath and copse and nooks of plumpy fern ;
And tributes of sweet sound the river pays,
Changing to blithe or sad at every turn.
The gilded flies, when noon's faint zephyr stirs,
Upon the sunny shallows walk or swim ;
And swallows too, those welcome foreigners,
Under thy bridges, summer tourists, skim,
Like the light crowd of English yearly thrown
On river-banks less lovely than their own.

XCVI.

Loughrigg.

I.

WOULD they not judge untruly who should deem
I had no friends but those I named in song ?
Would it not be ungentle thus to dream,
And do poetic silence heartless wrong ?

II.

The meadow-brooks with their sweet clamor guide
Their bending selves to a most wayward time,
Will earth and sky less waywardly preside
O'er the meek wills of poets in their prime ?

III.

So hath it been, dear Loughrigg ! that till now
My song hath touched less often than it might
At thy fair mountain havens, which do glow
With such a wealth of hues in this clear light.

IV.

Oft as a poet, feeble at my craft,
Did I seek shelter in Helvellyn's fame,
And, with poor fraud, on my dull verse did graft
Fresh sound and fulness from his mighty name.

V.

Yet it were hard if this most wondrous dawn
With its whole sheet of purest sun-light thrown
From the blue laughing skies o'er thy rough lawn,
Cold bubbling brook and lichen-written stone—

VI.

Yes—it were hard, if such an hour at least
Laid not on me some little tax of song,
For thee, the table where, as at a feast,
All the rich kinds of mountain beauty throng.

VII.

Thou art a world in miniature, a land
Wrought with such curious toil, as though in
mirth
Nature had thrown thee from her dexterous hand
To be a sportive model of the earth.

VIII.

All made by laws, green cleft and sinuous path
Cross, like great mountain outlets, every way;
And the long outline, which thy summit hath,
Mimics rude Alp and splintered Himalay,

IX.

Or like a Cross to Christians thou mayst seem,
With thy four points to lake or river bent,
Sunk in a font, and luring Heaven to gleam
On thee through the redeeming element.

X.

When first I saw thee, butterworts had set
Their sickly stars about thy hundred springs,
With one blue flower apiece, content to let
The fresh fern fan them with its neighbouring
wings.

XI.

The fern was like green dust upon the hill,
Which vernal winds might almost blow away;
But it changed dresses with the months at will,
And with the cold its fashions grew more gay.

xii.

Ne'er have I felt the might of morning rest
Its cold fresh welcome half so strong and free
As on thy heathy side and windy crest,
Except in early daybreaks out at sea.

xiii.

Oft, o'er the noonday woods, on thy west crown
My rhyming fancy woodland visions weaves,
Till, with old boyish impulse darting down,
I plunge and lose myself among the leaves.

xiv.

Thy southern scars, all masked with oak-wood
bowers,
Like feudal dwellings, mouldering whitely, shine
Through the soft nights of summer, as the towers
In the deep yellow moonlight on the Rhine.

xv.

To winter's cold-eyed sun, o'er snowy drifts
That scriptural tree, the juniper, doth lean,
While many a patch of wannest silver shifts
O'er the strange dazzling sheet of white and
green.

xvi.

One rainy summer, often as I stood
Within yon churchyard, gazing on thy side,
One brow of thine with an incessant flood
Of fruitful sunlight rose in gleamy pride.

xvii.

Let the wet skies be loaded e'er so much,
That lighting up no dreary mists could swage ;
Care might as soon efface the angelic touch
On the bright brow of Christian old age.

xviii.

Many a calm fancy and sweet-sounding word
To thee, dear Loughrigg ! do of right belong ;
And, though thy name of softness be unheard,
Thou of all mountains art mine undersong.

xix.

In tempted times, when my weak soul had need
Of all earth's props and stays, I fled to thee ;
And in thy sunken haunts I now may read
The secrets of my own biography.

xx.

O may no wind wake up for other ears
The sad confessions trusted to thy keeping ;
But, for the Cross that pardons and the tears
That win us grace, dear mountain, leave them
sleeping !

XCVII.

The World's Wake.

'TWERE a choice lot if my poor thoughts could
make
By meditative power a separate boat,
Wherein their master and themselves might float
Some little way behind in this world's wake.
Now, as it swerves and rocks along its course
Over smooth seas with new-discovered force,
I in my boat would follow, uttering
From out the bosom of a quiet time
Words of most warning sweetness, shreds of rhyme
Scarce to be heard for ocean's murmuring.
And some few gentle ones upon the deck,
Who heard my song and loved it, might make
moan,
When a rough wave, that made my bark a wreck,
Left the gray sea and glistening wake alone.

XCVIII.

In-doors and Out-of-doors.

THERE are three gifts apart, whereby good men
 Do good unto their fellows. Some can press
 Power out of heartless books with subtle pen
 Through stedfast years of in-doors weariness.
 Others there are, who in the outward fret
 Of states and towns with their best wealth at war,
 With help from Heaven, have kept the world as
 yet

From working toward its doom too fast or far.
 And there are some, whose lives are out-of-doors,
 In hopeful spots the Cross and Keys applying,
 Unfastening there from Earth's green-shining
 floors

The ponderous curse that hath so long been lying
 O'er its hushed fields, bewildering heathen guess
 With intricate, unmeaning loveliness.

XCIX.

Scenery Hunting.

LIGHT multitudes ! O spare the weary seas,
 That like tired subjects bear you year by year.
 Europe stands wondering on her spacious quays,
 With face half-doubting whether smile or tear
 Would fittest greet the Englishman's disease.
 Strange people ! flung like spray from summer
 tides
 In leafy places and o'er green hill-sides !
 Substance fades off to form ; each glorious thing,
 Wherein ancestral wisdom was enshrined,
 Whereto imaginative power might cling
 With Christian hold, is shed upon the wind.
 Man, made of earth, from earth will strive to
 bring
 O'er his dull lifetime the receding light
 Of the Eternal and the Infinite.

C.

The Lammas Shoots.

I.

THE Lammas shoots are on the woods,
And summer sameness flies ;
All England through pale autumn is
The season of good-byes.

II.

And well, my true love, dost thou know
My holydays are past,
And though I linger yet, good-bye
Will come to us at last.

III.

The year hath gone, and fortune's lap
Is bare and barren still ;
Nor gold nor lands have fallen yet
Our vision to fulfil.

IV.

Then fix a spot, and let it be
The greenest, calmest dell,
Where on the morrow we may meet
To kiss and say farewell.

V.

Fix it in yon rich lady's park,
Where by the stony floods
At hazy noon the poplars stand
Like steeples in the woods.

VI.

“ Not there, young lover ! no, not there
Shall my farewell be said,
Where gentle deer have greeted me,
Belling from ferny bed.

VII.

“ Oft have I wandered from the house,
To meet with thee betimes,
But thou wert buried in thy books,
Or loitering at thy rhymes.”

VIII.

Then fix it by the farm that stands
Within yon sunken valley,
Whose whitewashed sides smile cheerful down
The Ontario poplar alley,

IX.

Where, in the heats, faint midsummer
Her languid self incloses
'Mid boughs of nodding sycamore
And beds of monthly roses.

X.

“ Have I forgot, most selfish soul,
When the sun was on the water,
Who sat and wished that you and I
Were poor men's son and daughter ? ”

XI.

Then fix it, dearest, by the pass
Among the English mountains,
Where we so oft have timed our talk
To Loughrigg's leaping fountains.

xii.

“ Didst thou not tell me I was like
The mountain-pathway clear,
That shines distinctly green far off,
And fades when we come near ? ”

xiii.

Then fix it, damsel, up aloft
Upon yon craggy brow ;
It may remind thee there are things
Less changeable than thou.

xiv.

“ No ; I will fix it in the spot
Of that remembered bliss,
When first I let thee steal from me
An unresisted kiss.

xv.

“ The best of earthly joys is that
Which scorneth not to borrow
Its charm, if chance permit, from its
Relationship to sorrow.

XVI.

“ Our courtship round that kissing-place
Shall rear its few sad flowers :
Life’s silver sunbeams wildest shine
When sheathed in swarthy showers.

XVII.

“ I’ll say my farewell words, Sir Boy,
Where the peat-stained water dashes
Spray, light as minstrel lovers’ vows,
Against the mountain-ashes.”

CI.

To my Pupil.

BROTHER ! we left the port of our new birth
 At different times ; yet hath our coasting been
 Along a lovely quarter of the earth,
 Where the calm bays are blue and sea-banks green.
 Now, be it cloudy time or shining weather,
 Our barks are anchored for a while together.
 Somewhat in river-mouths have I been taught
 With inland winds for teachers,—somewhat too,
 Belike less heeded, from old volumes brought
 By angel hands to give me nature's clue.
 By gentlest incantations round thee thrown,
 Come, let me tinge thy spirit with mine own,—
 With more of chasteness, lest life's toils should
 press
 Thine over-docile heart and masculine loveliness.

CII.

Richard's Tree,

WATERPARK, CONISTON.

By what strange lure are thy free spirits bound,
 With thy bare feet and wonder-smitten face,
 Close to this mountain-ash, as if to trace
 Thine infant foot-prints in the grass around?
 Ah! little Boy, since thine unsteady pace
 Wore round this guiding stem a yellow ring,
 Hot sun and dewy moon have clothed the place
 Anew with their alternate visiting.
 Even through eight thin years there is a past,
 Which speaketh to thee in thy childish spirit,
 And thy fresh soul hath mighty shadows cast
 From the dark store our nature doth inherit.
 Long may this tree, unpruned for thy dear sake,
 Wave to the merry splashing of the lake!

CIII.

Written in Conway Castle.

ENGLAND ! thy strifes are written on thy fields
In grim old characters, which studious time
Wears down to beauty, while green nature yields
Soft ivy-veils to clothe gray holds of crime,
And hides war's prints with spring-flowers that
might wave
Their pale sweet selves upon a martyr's grave.
Here hath the ploughshare of the Conquest worn
The furrowed moat around a cruel tower ;
There York's white Roses fringe in blameless scorn
The ledge of some Lancastrian lady's bower.
Least, for my country's sake, may I regret
The fruitful angers, and good blood that ran
So hot from Royalist and Puritan,
Which in our very soil is red and throbbing yet.

CIV.

Old-fashioned Houses.

FOR A LADY FOND OF OLD FURNITURE.

SWEET are old Courts with dates above the doors,
 And yew-trees clipped in shapes, and cedar walks,
 And lawns whereon a quiet peacock stalks,
 And leaden casements, and black shining floors,
 And arm-chairs carved like good cathedral stalls,
 And huge French clocks, and bedsteads most
 inviting,
 And stiff old ladies hung upon the walls,
 Famed in the days of English Memoir-writing :—
 Places whose very look kind thoughts might draw
 E'en to Anne Stuart or William of Nassau.
 Sweeter than Tudor-stricken shrines are they,
 With pleasant grounds and rivers lingering by,—
 Quaint homes, that shed a pure, domestic ray
 O'er the dull time of English history.

CV.

The Menai Bridge.

FAIREST of rocky England's channel-gates !
With what a blessed calm to the main ocean
The ebbing tide with silent under-motion
Upward is drawn along thy weedy Straits !
The glossy water, shot with blue and green,
Throws off the sunlight, like the restless throat
Of some vain dove ; and ships, methinks, might
float,
Trusting the deep in places so serene.
Thus wreathed in folds of summer bellow, who
Would deem old tales of wreck and tempest true,
Where yon vast Marvel, like an albatross
Still springing upward, as it seems, in air,
Spreads in light grandeur his huge wings across,
Self-poised in momentary balance there ?

CVI.

Penryn Castle.

“ See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within curtains.”

STRANGER! if thou hast mourned o'er wasting shrine,

And costly churches falling to decay,
 Then will thy blameless anger rise like mine,
 Cast for an hour 'mid this unblest display.
 Damask and gold and colored timbers rare
 And churchlike carvings soothe the owner's sense ;
 Yet hath no famous line been cradled here
 With names to hallow such magnificence.
 Poor England lay before that rich man's gates,
 Like Lazarus ; but he reared halls wherein
 To shrine himself and worship modern sin,
 Where modern praise the sumptuous crime awaits.
 Come forth, come forth, and breathe all fresh and
 free

The winds that blend from mountain-height and
 sea !

CVII.

Church Postures.

YE would not sit at ease while meek men kneel
Did ye but see His face shine through the veil,
And the unearthly forms that round you steal
Hidden in beauteous light, splendid or pale
As the rich Service leads. And prostrate faith
Shroudeth her timorous eye, while through the air
Hovers and hangs the Spirit's cleansing Breath
In Whitsun shapes o'er each true worshipper.
Deep wreaths of Angels, burning from the East,
Around the consecrated Shrine are braced,
The awful Stone where by fit hands are placed
The Flesh and Blood of the tremendous Feast.
But kneel—the Bishop on the Altar-stair
Will bring a blessing out of Sion there.

CVIII.

Snowdon,

IN THE PASS OF LLANBERIS.

HOLDING by this rude crag I stay to listen,
Where the white noonday moon looks o'er the
steep,
And sheets of mountain water hang and glisten,
Catching the sun far up in their long leap.
Snowdon's whole range is rocking in the wind,
Ridges and splintered rooms and lifeless vales,
Calling forth mighty sounds, while they unbind
The echoing chords of this vast harp of Wales,
Forget not Whom the winds forth-shadow ! Hark,
How the huge hills take up in hollows dark
The clang from these distracted caverns tossed,
Till the brave eagles in their holds have trembled,
Crouching and screaming to the choir assembled
Round this dread Altar of the Holy Ghost.

CIX.

Nights for Poets.

I.

Is night fairest among mountains
And by the rushy lea,
Or cradled on the fountains
Of the unpolluted sea ?

II.

Does moonlight come most brightly
Unto the white-faced steep,
Or when it wanders lightly
In sweet paths o'er the deep ?

III.

Are stars most pure when making
Jewels for mountain crest,
Or with their shadows shaking
In ocean's pearly breast ?

IV.

Is darkness grander covering
A mountain's hollow dells,
Than when it droopeth hovering
Upon the broad sea-swells ?

V.

Be it mountain, be it ocean,
When night comes on the earth,
If a river's quiet motion
Be near me with its mirth.

VI.

Can any toil be sweeter
Than for me to lie and dream,
And have my time and metre
Made for me by a stream ?

VII.

Then all night's gentle seemings
Into my sleep I take,
And a long night's pleasant dreamings
Are poems when I wake.

CX.

Sunlight and Moonlight.

SUNLIGHT and Moonlight, these two glories, reach
Into our souls from our first day and night,
And we live afterwards on what they teach,
Finding our way by their two kinds of light.
Our Sunlight is the stedfast radiance cast
Through true church-windows, lustrous and un-
fading,
Where Creed and Rite are luminous, and last
When the sweet orb that perilleth our lading,
Luring the ship astray, hath sunk for aye,—
Leaving gray water where her light was thrown,
Hanging midway between the earth and sky
To lead to some fair haven of her own.
Love is the Moonlight of our lives, and takes
All hearts to the soft shadows that it makes.

CXI.

Softly the Ships do sail.

I.

SOFTLY the ships do sail,
Dipping in the billow,
Now that the weary gale
Findeth there its pillow.

II.

The sea doth lift its plain,
Tremulous and shining ;
Like threads upon the main
Glossy wakes are twining.

III.

In twilight rings the calm
Binds the current's motion,
While evening's inland balm
Quivers on the ocean.

IV.

Such calms, such heavenly air
Soothe my spirit often,
When thy sweet eyes are there
Chafing thoughts to soften.

V.

By this transparent sea
Have I many an even
Waited to catch from thee
Images of heaven.

VI.

My heart hath oft the while
Ceased its very beating,
At thine infrequent smile,
Beautifully fleeting.

VII.

Dearest ! in such deep times
This gray stone I 've fingered,
And words in choicest rhymes
Backwardly have lingered.

VIII.

For when I love thee most,
Words seem little loving,
And golden hours are lost
In unwise improving.

IX.

If love cannot be told
When we are love-making,
I 'll try with strife and scold
In sunshine showers breaking.

X.

But, be it bright or wet,
Hot words must be spoken,
For, if they loiter yet,
Heart-strings will be broken.

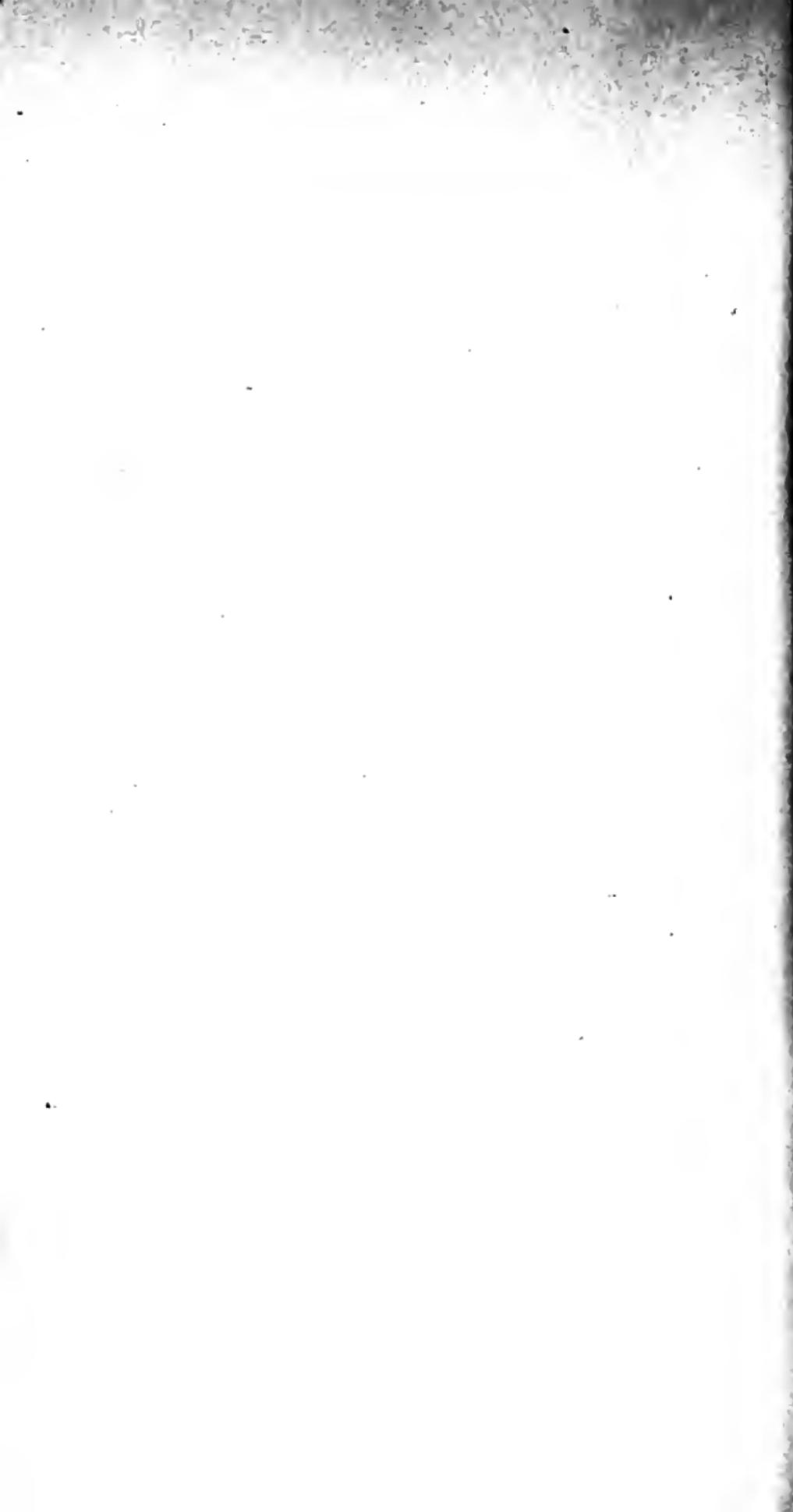
CXII.

Welsh Valleys.

By mountain-pass and long stone-sprinkled alley,
 Through sweet vicissitudes of barrenness,
 Our pathway lies,—with scarce a tree to bless
 The worn wayfarer in the noonday valley.
 My months have many turns like these, and each
 Seems to drop down to lowlands broad and win-
 ning ;
 But the hills hold them upward : will they reach
 Ere night the promise of their green beginning ?
 Thus my young life its own poor image takes
 From bleak Caernarvon's small, unwooded lakes.
 A man with many homes hath none to spare ;
 Though he beget in calm, rock-shaded places
 Welcomes, farewells, joys, griefs, and soothing
 faces,
 There is no echo to them in the air.

The Four Religious Heathens.

“ Put the heathen in fear, O Lord ; that they may know
themselves to be but men.”



TO

MY OLD TUTOR

C. L. C.



CXIII.

Herodotus.

“There is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared.”

He was a mild old man, and cherished much
The weight dark Egypt on his spirit laid;
And with a sinuous eloquence would touch
For ever at that haven of the dead.
Single romantic words by him were thrown,
As types, on men and places, with a power
Like that of shifting sunlight after shower
Kindling the cones of hills, and journeying on.
He feared the gods and heroes, and spake low,
That echo might not hear in her light room:
He was a dweller underground; for gloom
Fitted old heathen goodness more than glow;
And, where love was not, faith might gather mirth
From ore that glistened in pale beds of earth.

CXIV.

Nicias.

"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

NURSLING of heathen fear ! thy woful being
 Was steeped in gentleness by long disease,
 Though round thine awestruck mind were ever
 fleeing

Onens, and signs, and direful presages.
 One might believe in frames so gently stern,
 Some Christian thoughts before their time did
 burn.

Sadness was unto thee for love : thy spirit
 Rose loftily like some hard-featured stone,
 Which summer sunbeam never makes its throne,
 E'en while it fills the skirts of vapour near it.
 One wert thou, Nicias ! of the few who urge
 Their stricken souls while far-seen death doth hover
 In vision on them, nor may they diverge
 From the black line his chilling shadows cover.

CXV.

Socrates.

“Of making many books there is no end ; and much reading is a weariness of the flesh.”

THOU, mighty Heathen ! wert not so bereft
Of heavenly helps to thy great-hearted deeds
That thou shouldst dig for truths in broken creeds,
'Mid the loose sands of four old empires left.
Motions and shadows dimly glowing fell
On thy broad soul from forms invisible :
With its plain grandeur, simple, calm, and free,
What wonder was it that thy life should merit
Sparkles of grace and angel ministry
With jealous glimpses of the world of spirit ?
Greatest and best in this—that thy pure mind,
Upon its saving mission all intent,
Scorned the untruth of leaving books behind,
To claim for thine what through thy lips was sent.

CXVI.

Seneca.

“ At the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.”

OFT in the crowd and crossings of old Rome
The Christ-like shadow of the gifted Paul,
As he looked forth betimes from his hired home,
Might at this Gentile’s hurrying footsteps fall,
When, from his mornings in the Cæsar’s hall,
Spurred by great thoughts, the troubled sage did
come.

Some balmy truths most surely did he borrow
From the sweet neighbourhood of Christ, to bring
The harsh, hard waters of his heathen spring
In softening ducts o’er wastes of pagan sorrow.
As slips of green from fertile confines shoot
Into the tracts of sand, so heathen duty
Caught from his guided pen a cold, bright beauty,
Where flowers might all but blossom into fruit.

CXVII.

Uale Crucis Abbey.

I.

HERE, where wet winds autumnal rains may fling,
And pallid ash-trees in the transept lean,
The gentle-mannered monks were wont to sing
The Son of God, the Help of the unclean ;
And, from Cistercian service-books, to hymn
The blissful Mother, as the nights grew dim.

II.

Here, not unmindful of the public good,
Dwelt some poor beadsmen of the stainless Mary,
Bosomed, like monkish spots, in coves of wood,
That morn and eve with mystic commentary
Might for meek hearts re-join the broken threads,
Hid in Church books, like ore in jealous beds.

III.

And, at this hollow and in vales like this,
The winds took in good lading, and a freight
Of precious boons, dispensing balm and bliss,
Lifting from England's Saxon fields the weight
Of sins that sprung in such prolific brood
From the perverseness of her Norman blood.

IV.

Still, within hearing, at pale matin-time
There comes a soul into these ruins lone,
Where the clean-watered Dee his woodland chime
Steers with sweet skill from rich Edeyrnion,
Leaving on shady rock and mountain bending
Shreds of faint echo waked in his descending.

V.

Oft, when chill winds the compline hour have
tolled,
The broken East is fairly lighted yet,
Ever when in yon Gothic marigold
The harmless moon her full white orb hath set,
While, on the field beyond, her trembling fire
Streams mildly through the triple-windowed choir.

VI.

Thou visitor of ruins! thou mayst come
To worn portcullis and green-hooded wall,
Where some rude baron held his festal home
In moated fortalice or hunting-hall—
There thou mayst come, when placid nights are
wearing,
To learn of earth her art of soft repairing.

VII.

But other thoughts and deeper must be thine,
When by poor abbeys, tightly ivied o'er,
Thou dream'st that England, leaving Christian
shrine,
Hath turned herself to druid rite once more,—
Fearing in wakeful thoughts lest, heathen grown,
She should not miss the Cross when it is gone.

CXVIII.

On Receiving a Letter from a Friend,

AFTER AN INTERRUPTED CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

MORE changes still ? And are good hearts like thine
Bound to the ebbs and flows of common life ?
Ah ! many a novel thought and random line
Show where the world hath harmed thee with
its strife.

II.

Still thou art victor ; on thy pennon still
The Cross and thorny Chaplet are displayed,
Though the wet winds of life with evil will
Perchance have caused its crimson gloss to fade.

III.

Somewhat of Christian gracefulness hath past
 From the calm freeness which was thy chief
 merit ;
 Sadly unwise it was to make such haste,
 To bring an unripe manhood o'er thy spirit.

IV.

In these few lines of thine, a helpless strife,
 Somewhat too much unreal, I can trace
 'Gainst lingering boyhood ; though thine inner life
 Hath not as yet worked through upon thy face.

V.

Some men can change their inner lives by power
 Akin to witchcraft's lawless transmutation,
 And, by a shock of feeling, in one hour
 Set their soul's helm to some new constellation.

VI.

Ah woe is me ! my life keeps step no more
 With the old happy hearts it most approves ;
 Outstript by all, it hangs upon the shore,
 Taking perpetual leave of boyish loves.

VII.

Why ripenest thou thus early? What rich earth
Hast thou so lately heaped about thy root?
Am I like spendthrift trees in vernal mirth
That blossom double and count that for fruit?

VIII.

Like a watched shrub, my secret life is slow,
Built by the four great Seasons as they pass,
Curing mine eyes of blindness, while they show
The unseen world inverted on their glass.

IX.

My secret growth is slow, by little caught
Out on the earth in nights too bright for sleeping,
From checks and chills and gentle tempers brought
By the sweet, soothing sight of others weeping.

X.

So, like a forest-tree, screened from the north,
And, by the Planter's goodness, free from blight;
Some shady branches would I fain put forth,
Where sun and wind the backward leaves invite.

XI.

Thus, to be wetted by the showery breeze
Or shined on by the setting sun at even,
My boughs might then, piercing through other
trees,
O'ertop the wood, and so be free of Heaven.

XII.

But, while these fountains of late boyhood run,
Wasting cool earth and sheltering moss away,
My boughs, drawn upward by the gracious Sun,
Droop o'er the bole to hear those fountains play.

CXIX.

Up a Stream or Down.

TELL me, young Poet, is it sweeter
Up to the heads of streams to travel ;
Or do you minstrels deem it meeter
Their downward flowing to unravel ?

Poet.—From moorland well and heathy hollow
The seaward river thou must follow,
And trace it slowly till it bend
To lowlands round a mountain end,
Then through tame dell and cultured plain
Past tidewashed cities to the main.
There is a moral in its course,
Its tranquil depth and rocky force,
Its shining shallows, widening lakes,
And woody circuits that it takes.

Yet down the bank must thou descend,
The moral waits thee at the end :
For they, who downward rivers trace,
Look ocean ever in the face ;
And man, as youth and age run o'er him,
Hath life behind and death before him.

The mountain-height where sunset's finger
Rejoiceth o'er dull glens to linger ;
The winds that on the moorlands cross,
Sobbing above the barren moss ;
The clouds that touch on rainy days,
Drooping to where the well-spring plays :—
All these are types of things that reach
The lonely mind that knows not speech,
Things that in vision hover by
The dreary soul of infancy,
When it lays out, unmarred and even,
Its little being bare to Heaven.

Then, nurtured from the folding wombs
Of mighty clouds, the current comes,
Stretching with many a rushy arm
By copsewood and infrequent farm ;

And every furlong o'er some steep
The rainbow-belted waters leap,
The time ere tumbling rivers pass
To wind about in corn and grass,
A time of waste, as cold men deem,
When by its banks romancers dream.

And this is like the fair beginning
Of boyhood, troublesome and winning,
Where sunny tempers shine away
Converse ill-timed and weary play,—
A forward age of noisy beauty
Before the cloudy dawn of duty !

Mark when the water comes to hallow
Rich meadow-flat and barley fallow,
And chooses vales with poplar-trees,
And visits straggling villages,
Clips the broad green where children play,
And eats the churchyard earth away.

Yet, often leaving fruitful plain,
It seeks lone woody spots again,
Where every leaf in shadow sleeps
Unwaked upon the fishy deeps.

And so, when manhood doth begin
And toil breeds wealth, and wealth breeds sin,
How often is the full-grown being
To boyish-looking places fleeing,
Sweet shelters, where from noontide beams
Wise boyhood hides some dewy dreams ;
For who can see rain-scented woods
Drying their branches in the sun,
But straightway to the heart whole floods
Of aimless, rhymeless lyrics run ?
And fairy fish in silver mails
Or girt with moonlight-coloured scales,
Where under-water beds are bright,
Will glance and gleam and scatter light ;—
Just like the thoughts that leap to life
In spirits parched with trade and strife,
When on the surface from below
Old childish wells break up and flow,
And cowslips mixed with May-flowers grow.
Then, where upon some inland bower,
Salt tides encroach with brackish power,

'Tis like the taste that ill-health brings
From the broad grave's close-lying springs,
When age in times of failing breath
Doth freight itself with thoughts of death.
And river mouths have shapes so many,
Narrow and deep, or broad and fenny,
With rocky bar or easy gate
Or currents clashing in a strait,
That thou mayst well in these descry
The rude or gentle deaths men die.

Tell me, young Priest ! will it be sweeter
The downward flowing to unravel,
Or must we churchmen deem it meeter
Up to the heads of streams to travel ?

Priest.—The poet hath blithe answer made ;
My words must travel more in shade.
Where less of earth's wild show is given
There may perchance be more of Heaven.
Yet priests, like poets, have an eye
For radiant earth and changeful sky,

And mightier signs mayhap can trace
In river-nook and green-wood place.
The seasons with four currents flowing
Are all but symbols coming, going,
Translucent shades for ever passing,
Disjoined parts of Eden glassing.
For it were strange absolving word
On sinning soul should so be heard,
Yet have no power to lift from earth
Green dazzle and bewildering mirth,
Till she gives up to flesh and spirit
The secret lore they both inherit,
When in the Font's rich-sparkling round
The Key with golden wards is found.
To moorland well and heathy hollow
The upward river thou must follow,
Nor stay one hour in tideways brown,
By granite quay and toiling town ;
But, mounting on to cultured plain,
Reached by faint murmurs from the main,
Urge on, star-guided still by duty,
Through lands of rough sequestered beauty.

And rest on eagle-haunted fell
Where rings of hollow mosses swell,
And the young streamlets as they rise
Catch their first tint from mountain skies.
For they, who streams to fountains trace,
Look uplands ever in the face,
Leaving Death's type, the ocean gray,
Inaudible, and leagues away :
And man, as youth and age run o'er him,
Hath death behind and life before him.
Thou cam'st from an eternal womb,
Timid and tongue-tied from the gloom ;
Thou walkedst an eternal shore,
And heard'st eternal waters roar,
And gather'dst shells which thou didst keep
And bring with thee from yonder deep.
And thou thyself, like ocean shell,
Bearest within thee still a swell,
Which thy charmed hearing never may
In dryest inlands put away.
Ere from that ocean thou didst steer,
Where beauty walking leaned on fear,

Some branches of a mystic Tree
Were cast by prophets in the sea,
And Angels little cups did bring
Of cold sweet water from a spring,
And life went from the cups, and Breath
That breathed another face on death.

Then wert thou taught to hang and ride,
Like stedfast fish, against the tide,
Lifted by wind and lured by gleam
Upward to wrestle with the stream,
And with unearthly health to leap
Each cataract and frothy steep.

So mayst thou reach thy native fountains,
Withdrawn into the sleepless mountains,
Unstained in heats by lowing herd,
Unsipped by common hedgerow bird,
A well upon whose unmarred brink
Eagles alone are free to drink,
That they may thence their strength renew
For wheeling in the pathless blue,—
A font where thou canst wash away
The dusty stains of summer day,

Where health and life still hover by,
And where alone 'tis safe to die.

Fair are the plains where corn-fields bend,
And flowers and grass in meadows blend,
And calm the smell at eventide

When breezes o'er the bean-field glide,
And rich and lulling airs are blent
At noon from languid clover sent,—

Sweet pauses that at times may hallow
The dreary ridge and dusky fallow.

Yet from these scenes of harmless wealth
Good men rise upward still for health,
And slower, for the stream is quickest,
They mount where copse and heath are thickest,—
The boyish time of rivers, where
By heavy dews and keen fresh air
Old Heaven with infant splendour seems
To pass once more into their dreams,
Late years when out of ancient truth
The Christian wins a second youth.
And Christian age full fain will press
To world-neglected dreariness,

Where barren hills with naked line
Like sabre's dinterd edge do shine,
And lucid shadows calmly brood
As spirits o'er the solitude ;
And sight and sound have freedom given
That hath a very taste of heaven.

So, gentle questioner ! mayst thou
Attain thy native mountain-brow,
And from its ether-cinctured height
Look into lands of promised light.

Then to the Font beneath descend,
And o'er its tranquil pulses bend,
Recovering from its dewy earth
What life hath marred of childhood's mirth,

When evening shadows round thee steal
Then clasp the triple steps and kneel,
With gentle sob drawn in once more
That spring upon another shore

Shall rise, as fresh as waters vernal,
With spirit-pulses, and eternal.

Come, upward walk to moorlands gray
Where springs gush out from mountain root,

There let thy being sink away
Beneath the Font's stone-sculptured foot,
And, like waste water from its round,
Be poured on consecrated ground.

CXX.

A Westmoreland Hamlet.

TO B. C. B.

I.

THE rain hath ceased to weep upon the earth,
The very hills put off their misty shroud;
And evening cometh to her sunset birth
Through gorgeous bars of black and orange
cloud,
While the late beams their lustrous looms do ply
To weave and unweave rainbows in the sky.

II.

Beneath this mountain terrace, at my feet
Lies one of England's calm and green-field
hollows,
And a small village with its rain-washed street,
And eaves beset with clouds of autumn swal-
lows;
And the full river with its radiant flowing
Is like a harmless-natured serpent glowing.

III.

The sounds which from the cottages ascend
 Through the thin smoke that trembles up so
 lightly,
 With deep soul-soothing interchange do blend
 Toil's sweet fatigue and childhood's clamor
 sprightly,
 Where children, prisoned by the rain all day,
 Win their undreaming sleep in evening play.

IV.

There fathers watch, well-pleased, with folded
 arms,
 And at the doors young mothers come and go,
 And age, in out-door chairs, doth borrow charms,
 More than it wots of, from that sunset glow,
 And youths unblamed their early beds may press
 O'ercome by labor's pleasant weariness.

V.

The last gleam lingers on the hallowed ground,
 Whence passing souls ascend to realms of light,
 And now, with twilight's dreaded fence drawn
 round,
 The churchyard path is quiet for the night;

Though many a matron opes her casement there,
That she may breathe good dreams with church-
yard air.

VI.

O mighty are the gifts, and manifold
The tides of moral health and strength that roll
Throughyon small street,—not to be bought or sold,
But fresh from God in many a peasant soul
That might arise, and with meet aid from high,
Buoy Europe up against her destiny !

VII.

O England ! England ! wherefore so forswear
The healthy powers that with resistless shock
Bade fettered nations all their incense bear
To thy few leagues of billow-beaten rock,
And crowned thee empress on this ocean brow,
Where, lulled by foreign winds, thou sleepest now ?

VIII.

Calm lies upon the hamlet,—calm and sleep :
And, as I gaze on it, my pulses quicken,
And echos seem from every bush to leap,
Like the loud names that in our dreams do
thicken,—

Echos that come the autumn evening freighting
With England's name in low reverberating.

IX.

No boyish habit is my love for thee ;
For it came on with slow and conscious stealings,
So that thy woods and waters now must be
To me instead of passions and of feelings :
Yet every month thy thoughtless ways are loading
Dejected hearts like mine with dull foreboding.

X.

Not banks of cloud upon the mountain stooping,
Unmoved through ailing weeks of cheerless rain,
Not want of letters when my soul is drooping
For lack of love, and yet may not complain,
Not these, so much as thy poor barrenness
In all high thoughts and deeds, upon me press.

XI.

If in a harbour on a sunny day,
Foreseeing fate, thou mightest range the deck
Of some good ship, that on her Indian way
In one short week was doomed to midnight
wreck,—

Where rugged partings blend half-smiling fears
 With loves that play, like rainbows, among tears—

xii.

Oh ! hath thy mortal frame got nerves so strong
 To look with calmness into those clear faces,
 Setting their noisy sails with shout and song,
 To come no more unto their household places,
 But find, without church benison, a pillow
 On the salt sea's unconsecrated bellow.

xiii.

Such are the thoughts, my country ! which I bear
 Close to my heart all day and night for thee,
 Drinking in life with thine imperial air
 Fraught with the healthy spirit of the sea,
 Haply mistaking motes that dim mine eye
 For shapes and shadowings of prophecy.

xiv.

Not that I fear, as some, mechanic force,
 Which runs our life into another mould.
 Earth shall not see thought's wonder-working
 force
 Twisted aside by means for getting gold :

These have no moral soul within them swelling,
No spirit pulse, no passionate indwelling.

xv.

Great times are greatest in their ruins,—these

On after-years no giant shades may cast,
Where flesh and soul may both dig palaces
In the huge relics of a glorious past,—
As from the aqueducts Rome left behind,
Types of the cumbrous beauty of her mind.

xvi.

But I have fears, mayhap too hotly cherished,

Of the dense towns, like storm-clouds, o'er the
land,
Killing the popular heart that had been nourished
With fear and love, all chaste from nature's
hand,—

Spurning the weight wherewith the green earth lies
On peasant spirits with her mysteries.

xvii.

And I have fears, lest quickened times should bring
Guesses and notions, clothed in earnest dress,
And men, from this reformed self-worshipping,
Should make an idol of their earnestness,

Counting intensest love of moral beauty
Coin that may pass for simple-hearted duty.

XVIII.

O that my tongue to such calm power were
wrought,
With life to kindle, sweetness to assuage
Its own good fires,—to lodge some mighty thought
Far in the soul of this self-praising age,
Received into all England's wood and hill,
A native echo, heard when strifes are still.

XIX.

England hath need of harmless men, whose minds
May draw to their own color every heart,
Working in spots where angel help unbinds
The chains that fetter noble men apart,
That she might now, as erst, compacted be
Within one spiritual Unity.

To my Reader.

YOUNG Reader!—for most surely to the old
 These loose, uneven thinkings can but seem
 Unlifelike and unreal as a dream,—

O! judge not thou that I have been too bold
 With sacred teaching, or have done it wrong
 To give fair form or sweetness to my song:
 Nor be thou wearied with the changeful
 vision,

As though with labored and unmeaning skill
 I had but rifled fancy at my will,
 Or held her hidden order in derision.

O far from that:—these fitful strains keep
 blending,

Poorly yet truly, strivings gained or lost,
 By one in whom two tempers are contending,
 Neither of which hath yet come uppermost.

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J. R. Mee

